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# CATHOLIC LIFE



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CATHOLIC LIFE

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ECCE HOMO.

*Frontispiece.*



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Section

Number

# CATHOLIC LIFE

OR

THE FEASTS, FASTS, AND DEVOTIONS  
OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

' Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,  
Needs only to be seen to be admired.'

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DEDICATED TO  
OUR HOLY MOTHER THE CHURCH,  
AS A TRIBUTE OF FILIAL AFFECTION





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# CATHOLIC LIFE

## INTRODUCTION.

‘As the great feasts come round we should take up the fitting exercises and implore the prayers of the Saints with greater earnestness ; from feast to feast we should renew our good resolutions as if we were soon to leave this world and arrive at the eternal festival.’—*À KEMPIS.*

THE observance of religious feasts goes back to the cradle of humanity. Before the fall of Adam life was a continual feast, which was to be exchanged, without death, for the eternal joys of Heaven. All this was changed, but the remembrance of it and its Divine Author caused Adam and his family to devote certain times to adoration, praise, and thanksgiving, as we learn from the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. When the number of families increased, the Patriarchs, or heads, made these festivals more definite, and finally the Almighty, through Moses, regulated their number and ceremonial.

The Church, being empowered by Christ to regulate Divine worship, has established Christian

feasts. They afford us an opportunity of paying our homage to God Almighty, His Son made man, the Blessed Virgin, and other Saints. They also bring to our memories the great mysteries of our holy faith, and the edifying examples of pious lives, so that they are an incentive to the practice of good works. Thus, the celebration of feasts elevates our hearts above perishable things, and attaches them to the everlasting goods of Heaven. They, moreover, on account of their variety, break the monotony of the year, and afford a great many motives to excite us to the love and practice of virtue.

Religious fasts are appointed by the Church to help us to control the passions of our corrupt nature, by reason and religion. They also serve to satisfy God's justice on account of our past sins; in other words, to remit or shorten our purgatory.

The ceremonies accompanying exterior worship in the Church speak to the eyes of the faithful, and excite devotion, while they instruct us on the nature or effects of what is taking place. The minute particulars prescribed by God Himself for the ceremonial of the Mosaic Law shows their necessity, and how pleasing they are to Him. The great importance that the Church attaches to them, and the care she takes in training her ministers in all that relates to them, as well as the obligation she imposes for their due observance, are sufficient motives to esteem them.



They help us to raise our thoughts above earth. They captivate our senses. They rejoice our hearts. Let us, then, endeavour to know the meaning of the feasts, fasts, and ceremonies of Holy Church, and this knowledge will beget the proper spirit for their observance.

## SUNDAY.

‘If the Lord’s Day was not of Divine institution, it would be necessary to invent it as one of the surest means of maintaining order amongst men.’—*Anc. Leg.*

GOD Almighty in the beginning of the world appointed a Sabbath, or day of rest, to be kept once a week in memory of His having accomplished the creation of the world in six days, and His resting on the seventh; and also that man might not only give rest to his body, but especially to his soul. This is done by withdrawing from the cares and pleasures of life, and raising our thoughts to consider the eternal rest in the world to come, the means to secure it, and the evils to be avoided. Thus, the day of rest is a remembrance of God’s power and goodness, and so an excellent means of increasing our love for Him, because we cannot fail to love Him Whom we know to be the most perfect Being, to Whom all creatures owe their existence, Who is our greatest benefactor. Later on, when the sanctification of the Sabbath was included in the Ten Commandments given on Mount Sinai, Almighty God prefixed the word

*remember*, as time had shown how apt man was to forget Him and His service, by being too fond of the perishable goods and pleasures of this life.

The last day of the week was appointed to be kept holy in the Old Law, but the Church, the beloved spouse of Christ, chose Sunday in memory of our Saviour's resurrection and the descent of the Holy Ghost, both of which happened on that day. Hence it is called the Lord's Day.

We are obliged to hear Mass every Sunday, and to abstain from servile works which are not required by necessity or charity. We ought, also, to endeavour to be present at the other public devotions, such as Vespers, Sermon, Benediction, or Rosary. A part of the day might be profitably spent in reading pious books, such as the 'History of the Bible,' the 'Lives of the Saints,' the 'Imitation of Christ,' St. Liguori's 'Way of Salvation,' and the publications of the Catholic Truth Society, which may be found at most church doors. These will help us to enjoy that peace of heart which is found by those who retire from the noise and tumult of life to devote some time to their eternal interests.

There is a plenary indulgence granted in some countries to the faithful who receive Holy Communion worthily on the first Sunday of the month, and afterwards say a few Paters and Aves for the Pope's intentions.

Those who have more leisure and aptitude may further sanctify the Sunday by teaching catechism

in the church, collecting for the various charities, etc. A Sunday spent thus passes sweetly, having been truly sanctified by prayer and charity, and refreshed by family reunions, rest, and innocent joys. It is a guarantee of eternal rest in the kingdom of God.

‘Grant I may ever, at the morning ray,  
Open with prayer the consecrated Day ;  
Tune Thy great praise, and bid my soul arise,  
And with the mounting sun ascend the skies ;  
As that advances, let my zeal improve,  
And glow with ardour of consummate love ;  
Nor cease with eve, but with the setting sun  
My endless worship shall be still begun.’

*Example.*—RUDOLPH DE LISLE. Born A.D.  
1853.

If there was one specially marked characteristic about Rudolph from earliest boyhood, it was his absolute fearlessness, whether of danger, ridicule, or hardship, in the discharge of duty. Many striking instances of this better part of valour are given. Take one. There was a French man-of-war stationed not far from his ship in one of the harbours of the Pacific Ocean, and as there was Mass on board this ship, Rudolph thought it best to take his men there rather than go on shore. Leave was asked and obtained, so a quarter of an hour before the time, he arrived with his men. He himself was invited at once by the officers into the cabin, where they showed him every



politeness. But by and by, the quarter of an hour being expired, Rudolph looked at his watch, and said: 'Ah, I see 'tis Mass-time now.' These French officers were Catholics, but lived, as too many of the French in that station of life do, in total disregard of religion. So when Rudolph said 'It is Mass-time,' they replied, 'Mass! surely you are not going to Mass?' 'Yes, I am,' said Rudolph, and, at once taking leave, he went off and entered the place where Mass was said. About the time of the *Sanctus* one of the French officers slunk in. The next Sunday two or three came in; the Sunday after the whole of the officers attended Mass from the very commencement, and they continued to do so for the six weeks longer that the two men-of-war were within easy reach of each other.

## ADVENT.

‘If you desire to receive Jesus Christ you must search the foldings of your soul, that you may discover if any secret sin, which could wound the eyes of His Divine Majesty, lies hid in the depths of your conscience.’—ST. AUGUSTINE.

By Advent is meant the four weeks before Christmas, appointed by the Church to prepare us for the worthy celebration of our Saviour’s birth. We should endeavour by prayer, the practice of virtues, fasting, and a good confession, to have Jesus formed anew in our hearts at this holy season. For this reason the Gospel read at Mass on the first Sunday treats of His coming at the Last Day. The Church seems to say to us, ‘If you wish to behold without fear the arrival of that God Whom I announce to you, when He shall come as the supreme Judge of the living and the dead, prepare to receive Him now that He comes as a Saviour.’

On the Second Sunday of Advent the Church continues her instructions. The Gospel sets before us the Precursor, John the Baptist, point-





THE NATIVITY.

*To face p. 9.*

ing out in the person of Christ the Redeemer expected for four thousand years.

On the third Sunday the Baptist is again heard—‘The voice of one crying in the desert: Make straight the ways of the Lord. Behold He cometh, and I am not worthy to loose the latchet of His shoe.’\* He who uses these words is the greatest among the children of men. Oh! how holy is our Lord, and how careful we should be in preparing ourselves to receive Him!

We ought during this season to make use of frequent ejaculations inviting our Lord into our hearts. ‘O Divine Infant Jesus, come to be born in my heart, to drive out sin and to plant Thy virtues there.’

‘Great Judge of hearts, Thou dost discern  
Our ills, and all our weakness know;  
Again to Thee with tears we turn,  
Again to us Thy mercy show.  
And grant us, while by fasts we strive  
This mortal body to control,  
To fast from all the food of sin,  
And so to purify the soul.’

*Example.*—ST. PHILIP NERI.

A young man named Spazzara, who lived in Rome, visited St. Philip Neri one day, and entered into long details about the study of law, which he had just commenced. He described the course

\* John i. 27.



which he meant to pursue in order to obtain the degree of Doctor. 'And then?' demanded the Saint. 'Then,' replied the young man, much encouraged, 'I will plead causes, and I hope successfully.' 'And then?' added the Saint again. 'And then people will begin to speak of me, and I shall enjoy a reputation.' 'And then?' continued St. Philip, smiling. 'And then,' continued the young man, a little embarrassed, 'I shall live at my ease, and I shall be happy.' 'And what then?' 'Well, then—I shall die.' 'And then?' resumed the Saint, raising his voice. 'What shall you do when your own trial comes, when you, yourself, shall be the accused, Satan the accuser, and the Almighty your judge?' The young man, who little expected such a conclusion, hung his head and began to consider within himself. After this interview, he endeavoured, by consecrating his life to the service of God, to prepare seriously for the final judgment on which eternity depends.

## CHRISTMAS.

‘The Son of God was made the Son of man, that the sons of men might be made the sons of God.’—ST. AUGUSTINE.

THE circumstances of our Divine Lord’s birth are thus told in the Gospel: ‘And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God

shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. The shepherds said to one another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in a manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this Child. And all that heard wondered: and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying God, and praising Him for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them' (Luke ii. 1-20).

By this we see that our Lord teaches us from His very infancy to be humble and obedient, not to set our hearts on the perishable goods and pleasures of this world, and to bear trials and sufferings with submission to the holy will of God.

Three Masses—one of which is at midnight—

may be said by every priest to-day to honour (1) Christ's birth from all eternity as God; (2) His birth as man in the stable; (3) His birth by grace in the hearts of the faithful. While assisting at Mass on this great feast, we ought to imagine the altar to be the manger, and in union with the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph adore the Word made flesh, come to enlighten and save the world. We may, too, at the *Gloria in excelsis*, join with the angels in their song of joy, and beg for that good-will to which peace was promised; and finally, like the shepherds, offer our hearts as a homage due to Him. These prayers may be repeated with great advantage when we visit the crib erected in the church.

Remembering that our Lord says that whatever we do to His least brethren we do to Himself, we ought at this trying season to clothe some poor persons in honour of the Divine Child's poverty in the stable. There are many cast-off garments, laid aside through want of thought, which would be a luxury to the needy, especially those ashamed to beg.

While enjoying the many good things usually provided in abundance on this feast, we must take care not to exceed the bounds of moderation, especially in drink.

' To-day that Child is born again.  
The midnight Mass has sped,  
And Jesus steals in meaner guise  
Our souls more close to wed.

I scarce may envy her who clasped  
The Infant to her breast,  
Since He, the Babe of Christmas, comes  
In this poor heart to rest.'

*Example.*—CHARLES II. IN DISGUISE.

The Son of God, during His mortal life, resembled a King dressed as a servant.

Charles II., King of England, after the Battle of Worcester, was forced to hide in forests to escape from his enemies who pursued him. His faithful followers disguised him by cutting his hair, staining his hands and face, and giving him the costume and implements of a woodman. Being frequently met, he was mistaken for an ordinary poor workman, but those who were in the secret respected him as their King. It is the same with those who have faith, recognizing in Jesus Christ the true Son of God, hidden under the guise of our humanity, even as a little helpless babe, or, greater disguise still, the Sacramental species of our altars.



## NEW YEAR'S DAY.

‘The Holy Name of Jesus justifies the sinner, delights the just, supports those who are tempted, augments grace for the just, and beatifies all that call upon it.’—ST. THOMAS.

THE ecclesiastical name for this day is the Feast of the Circumcision. It was instituted in honour of our Lord’s receiving, on the eighth day after His birth, the mark of God’s covenant with Abraham. The reception of this Sacrament of the Old Law was what distinguished God’s chosen people from the rest of mankind, and was a figure of Baptism, which in the New Law distinguishes Christians from pagans and others.

The Divine Child was exempt from the ceremony, which was a remedy for sin, because He was Sanctity itself; but He submitted to it, having taken upon Himself the figure of sinful man, and to teach us respect and obedience to the laws of God and the Church. He also submitted to it in order to show that He was descended from Abraham, and thus fulfilled the promise made of old to that Patriarch that the Messiah should be born of his race.

On that occasion He received the name of Jesus, which signifies Saviour, in accordance with the command of the angel to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph.

On this day we ought to repeat frequently the 'Divine Praises' in reparation for the many times the Holy Name is used irreverently. We can resolve, too, that in future, whenever, in the streets or other places, we hear the Holy Name insulted, we will raise our hats and say, 'Blessed be the Name of Jesus,' and thus send reparation at once to the throne of God. The Litany of Jesus may also be said, with the view of obtaining a great increase of respect, love for, and confidence in Him. We ought also to thank God for conferring on us, without any merit on our part, the grace of Baptism, conferred, too, at a time when we could not thank Him. Let us renew our Baptismal vows with great fervour, especially as it happens to be the first day of the new year, and make firm resolutions to avoid sin and to practise virtue more steadfastly than in the past. In the case of habitual sins we must try to find out the causes and remove them. We can more easily do this if we impress deeply on our minds the unspeakable value of the grace of God. It was to give or increase it that the Sacraments were instituted. It was to preserve it that the Commandments were ordained, and it is to deprive us of it that the devil watches us and attacks us so frequently and violently.

' Blest Name that is rest and a shelter,  
And light to the heart perplexed ;  
In this life, my last word and dearest,  
My rapturous first, in the next.'

*Example.*—ST. GENESIUS.

Genesius was a pagan Roman comedian. He was so skilled in his art that he was the idol of the Romans, and always drew an immense multitude of spectators. Public rejoicings were going on, and the Emperor Diocletian came to the capital in great state. Amongst the entertainments prepared for him was a stage performance. Genesius, who was aware of the hatred of the Prince against the Christians, prepared a mock ceremony to ridicule the Sacrament of Baptism. He made his appearance in the theatre on a bed, pretending to be sick, and asked to be baptized, so that he might have a happy death. All this being done in comedy, excited the laughter of the people. Two actors then came forward, one dressed as a priest, the other as an exorcist, and said to Genesius, with mock gravity: 'My child, wherefore didst thou send for us?' Genesius, suddenly changed by a miracle of grace, answered seriously: 'Because I desire to receive the grace of Jesus Christ, and by holy regeneration to obtain remission of my sins.' The ceremonies of Baptism were then gone through. When the white robe, the mark of the newly baptized, was

put on him, the soldiers took him bound before the Emperor to be interrogated. Diocletian enjoyed the whole thing very much, and, to make the play more real, pretended to be very angry, and asked Genesius: 'Are you a Christian?' Genesius replied in an inspired tone: 'Hear me, O Emperor. Formerly, when I so much as heard the name of Jesus Christ uttered, I trembled with rage. I detested those among my relatives who professed the Christian religion. I studied the rites of Christians solely to scoff at them. But the moment the water of Baptism touched my flesh, my heart was changed, and I answered sincerely to the questions put to me. I saw a troop of angels over me, who read out of a book all the sins I had committed since childhood. Then, having plunged the book into the water, they showed it to me, whiter than snow, the writing being effaced. Do you, then, O mighty Emperor, and you, O Romans, believe with me that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and that He is worthy of our adoration, and try also to obtain His mercy.' The Emperor, equally surprised and irritated, first ordered him to be beaten with rods. Then he handed him over to the prefect Plautius to compel him to sacrifice to the idols. Genesius was stretched on a rack, and had his sides burnt with torches. Many other tortures were tried in vain. The martyr constantly repeated: 'There is no other Lord like Him Who appeared to me. I adore and love Him with my

whole soul; though I had a thousand lives to lose, nothing could separate me from Him. Never—no, never—shall torments take Jesus from my mouth and heart. I feel the deepest sorrow for all my past errors, and for having commenced so late to serve Him.' Seeing that his eloquence was making an impression on the people, the Emperor ordered his head to be cut off.

## THE EPIPHANY.

‘If you adore God without presenting Him some offering, your devotion is false.’—ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

The word ‘Epiphany’ means *manifestation*, and is given to this feast because on that day our Lord manifested Himself to the Gentiles through the wise men. The Gospel thus relates the fact: ‘When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to adore Him. And Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him, In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule My people Israel. Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently



of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said, Go, and diligently inquire after the Child; and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him. Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the east went before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His Mother; and, falling down, they adored Him; and, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And, having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country' (Matt. ii. 1-12).

We may learn many useful lessons from this day's Gospel: First, that when the ministers of God do not practise what they preach, we are, nevertheless—in imitation of the Wise Men—to walk by the lights they give us, without heeding their example. Second, that a great many are backward in going to Christ and embracing His truths, biassed by the consideration of interest, reputation, dependence, human respect, and other private or human motives. The great remedy for these is to imitate the manly faith of the Magi, and to keep our hearts, like them, detached from perishable things—wealth, pleasures, popularity, etc. The offerings of the Kings were symbolical.

The gold showed that our Lord was a King; the incense declared His Divinity, and the myrrh His humanity. They were also typical of the virtues which we ought to offer to our Blessed Saviour—viz., charity, typified by the gold; prayer, by the incense; and mortification, by the myrrh. Mortification is a chief means for acquiring control of our unruly passions. What the spur and reins are to a skilful rider, mortification is to a zealous Christian.

On this feast we ought—(1) To thank God for calling us, through our ancestors, out of His pure mercy to the faith of Christ. (2) To adore Jesus Christ with the Wise Men, and to offer Him a sacrifice of our goods, by alms; of our hearts, by prayer; and of our evil inclinations by mortification. (3) To beg pardon for the many times we have neglected God's inspirations and followed the suggestions of interest, passion, and self-love. (4) To resolve, in spite of all worldly arguments to the contrary, to follow courageously and readily the lights of faith, the directions of our spiritual guides, and the inspirations of Almighty God, begging grace to do so. (5) To pray for the conversion of all who are still in the darkness of vice, error, or infidelity.

We can become *stars* to lead the Gentiles yet in darkness to Christ, by contributing regularly to the funds of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood. The latter gives even to children an opportunity of doing

apostolic work. If we only knew the trials and difficulties experienced by missionaries in pagan countries, deprived of the ordinary resources of civilized life, we should be much more generous and more zealous in interesting others in the noble work.

‘ Oh, may His bright star  
Of Faith beam afar,  
And pierce the deep gloom of the night,  
To bring, as of yore,  
Wise men to adore  
The Christ-Child, the Fountain of Light !’

*Example.*—THE MARTYRS OF JAPAN.

In 1612 an English captain named William Adams, moved by hatred to Catholic priests, and by his national animosity to Spain, persuaded the Emperor of Japan that, under colour of religious zeal, the Jesuits were in reality the emissaries of a hostile power, whose object was the conquest of Japan. The long-threatening storm then burst forth. The scenes that Rome had witnessed in the heroic age of the early Church were now acted afresh.

At Arima, where the persecution was fiercest, among many other glorious martyrs was a little Christian child named Thomas, whose father had just been beheaded for the Faith, and who was condemned to the same fate. He had shouted with delight on hearing the sentence, and on

account of his tender years the executioner led him by the hand to the place of death. Here the child knelt down by the side of his father's mutilated body, calmly bared his neck, and with clasped hands and cast-down eyes waited for the fatal stroke. Three soldiers, one after another, attempted to execute the sentence, but each one in turn burst into tears and cast away his sword. At length a slave was found, who literally hacked the child to pieces, but not even a sigh of pain escaped from the lips of the youthful martyr.

Civandono, King of Bongo, being urged to renounce the Faith, made the following noble and solemn protest :

'I swear in Your presence, O Almighty God, that if all the Jesuits, by whose ministry You have called me to Christianity, should renounce their own teaching, and even if I were assured that all the Christians of Europe had denied Your Name, I would still confess, acknowledge, and adore You as the One, True, Almighty God of the Universe, and this even at the cost of my life.'

## LENT.

‘Fasting is the food of virtue. It inspires good thoughts and holy desires. It renovates the spiritual man.’—ST. LEO.

LENT is a fast of apostolical tradition, which in all ages has been observed throughout the Church of God. It was instituted—(1) To honour and imitate our Saviour’s fast in the desert. (2) That the faithful might prepare themselves by prayer, penance, and fasting for duly celebrating the adorable mysteries of His Passion and Resurrection. (3) To consecrate to God by a penance of forty days the tenth of our lives, as an acknowledgment that our whole lives ought to be so spent.

The fast is obligatory on all those who have completed their twenty-first year, and who are not exempt through delicate health, hard work, old age, poverty, dispensation, etc. It consists in taking only one full meal (dinner), with a collation or other slight meal not exceeding eight ounces of solid food. Custom permits the taking of a cup of tea or light drink and a couple of ounces of bread at some other time during the day. As to



what may be eaten at collation and dinner, the Bishop's Pastoral, published at the beginning of Lent, is our guide.

Those who are not bound to fast ought to enter into the spirit of the Church and perform penance in a way suitable to their condition, such as depriving themselves of some innocent pleasure, giving alms, etc. All can fast spiritually by abstaining from sin and its immediate occasions.

Penance is necessary for all, both just and sinners. It is necessary for the just, as no one can be certain of his perseverance to the end, no one is totally exempt from sin, and every one is liable to fall. It is necessary for sinners, as a satisfaction to God for their guilt; as a punishment, self-inflicted, to avert Divine punishment; and as a spiritual remedy, healing the wounds of sin and preventing future falls.

Daily Mass, evening devotions at church, and family night prayers said in common, should be the special practices of this holy season. All should prepare for the worthy reception of the Sacraments. In fine, all should endeavour to reap a spiritual harvest by making such a provision of graces and virtues as may last the whole year. The Stations of the Cross ought to be made once a week. Our alms ought to be more generous than usual, as it is the spirit of the Church that part of what we save by abstinence should be given to the needy.



‘The feast of penance ! Oh, so bright  
With true conversion’s heavenly light,  
Like sunrise after stormy night !  
Full long in sin’s dark ways we went,  
Yet now our steps are heavenward bent,  
And grace is plentiful in Lent.’

*Example.*—MARTYRDOM OF ELEAZAR.

Antiochus, having made himself master of Jerusalem, raged with all the fury of a tyrant against its miserable inhabitants. Amongst those who gloriously confessed the true God was Eleazar, a chief scribe, whose piety and grey hairs rendered him truly venerable. Being apprehended by the King’s officers, and, in contempt of the law, being violently pressed to eat swine’s flesh, which they thrust into his mouth, he vigorously resisted, and preferred a glorious death to the dishonourable terms of life. He went on cheerfully to the place of execution, when they who accompanied him, being moved with compassion and respect for his age, took him aside, and begged he would consent to let some legal meat be set before him, that by eating of that, at least, he might seem to comply with the King’s order, which would be enough to save his life. The venerable old man was not to be imposed upon by such pretexts of friendship. He considered the unblemished character he had hitherto maintained through life, the testimony he owed to truth, and the respect due to the Law of God in those particular circumstances, and rejected

their proposal with a nobleness of soul that was natural to him. 'I would rather die,' said he, 'than do what you counsel me. Such dissimulation becomes not these grey hairs. God forbid that I should ever sully the purity of my former life by such a stain, and thereby give occasion to the young men to imagine that Eleazar, at the age of four score and ten, has renounced the religion of his forefathers, and consented to the superstitions of the pagans. Miserable should I be indeed if the poor remains of declining life could tempt me to prevaricate in so shameful a manner. For, although I were to escape the judgments of men for the present, yet neither alive nor dead should I escape the hand of the Almighty. It is better, therefore, for me to die courageously at once than by a disgraceful compliance appear unworthy of my old age. So by example I shall teach my fellow-citizens that the laws of God are to be preferred to those of men; that the duties of religion are to take precedence of worldly interest, and even of life itself' (2 Mac. vi. 18, 31).

This noble and generous answer was attributed to a stubborn pride by his pretended friends, who thereupon turned their professions of kindness into injuries. Eleazar was forthwith carried to the place of execution, where by a glorious death he left, not to the young men only, but to the whole nation, an example of the most heroic fortitude.

## ASH WEDNESDAY.

‘Study now to live so holy a life that you may rejoice rather than fear when your last hour comes.’—**Ä KEMPIS.**

THE first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday, from the custom of putting blessed ashes on the foreheads of the faithful. The ceremony originated from the practice of the early Church, which she took up from the example of the Ninivites, recommended by our Blessed Saviour. In the primitive ages of the Church at the beginning of Lent the Bishop or his Penitentiary used to cast ashes upon sinners, who came in sackcloth to the church to perform their penance, in hopes of being reconciled and absolved at the end of Lent. The ceremony is now practised towards all the faithful, because it is a time of penance for all, without exception.

While blessing the ashes, the priest in the name of the Church begs for all her children the remission of their sins, and to that end the spirit of compunction and grace to employ as they ought the time of Lent in doing penance. During the blessing, and when getting them on our

foreheads, we should join our prayers with those of the Church, and beg a contrite and humble heart—represented by the ashes—and that wholesome fear of God's judgments (which is the beginning of wisdom) and the grace of penance. The priest signs our foreheads with the ashes in the form of a cross, and reminds us of the sentence pronounced by Almighty God upon Adam and his posterity: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.'\* In using these words the Church intends to excite her children to penance from the consideration of death, which is the punishment of sin. Consequently, we should be firmly convinced that the only true wisdom is to disengage our affections from earthly things, to love and fear God, to keep His commandments, and by doing penance to prepare for death. We shall find this easy if we frequently think on the certainty of death, the uncertainty of its time, and the eternal consequences of the condition of soul in which that moment will find us.

During Mass we ought to pray that God would be pleased to preserve these sentiments in our hearts during Lent and for the remainder of our lives.

' But vain all outward form of grief,  
And vain the word of prayer,  
Unless the heart desire relief,  
And penitence be there.

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\* Gen. iii. 19.

The forehead prostrate in the dust,  
The hair and garments torn,  
Can never stay the vengeance just,  
Unless the conscience mourn.'

*Example.*—THEODOSIUS.

The Emperor Theodosius, while attending a council at Milan, was informed of the murder of some of his officials at Thessalonica. He was persuaded by one of his Ministers to punish the inhabitants with great cruelty. Soldiers were let loose on the poor defenceless people while enjoying games at the circus, and seven thousand were massacred, without distinguishing the innocent from the guilty.

St. Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, wrote him a very tender but strong letter, exhorting him to penance, and declaring that he neither could nor would receive his offering, nor celebrate the Divine mysteries before him, till he satisfied this obligation. Soon after the Emperor, according to custom, went to church. On the way he was informed of the Saint's intention to exclude him, and was advised to stay away. He said, 'I will go and receive the rebuke which I deserve.' St. Ambrose met him at the door and forbade him to enter. The Prince, by way of extenuating his offence, said David had sinned. 'Him whom you have followed in sinning, follow also in his repentance' replied the holy Bishop.

Theodosius submitted, accepted the penance, and, clad in penitential garments—sackcloth and ashes— placed himself among the public penitents. He knelt at the church door, and lay prostrate, repeating with David, ‘My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: O Lord, restore my life, according to Thy word’ (Ps. cxviii. 25). He remained in this posture, beating his breast, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, begged pardon of God, lamenting his sin in presence of all the people, who were so touched at it as to weep and pray along with him.

Theodosius, after his absolution, passed no day until his death on which he did not bewail his offence, into which he was drawn by surprise and through the instigation of others.



## PASSION SUNDAY.

‘He who desires to go on advancing from virtue to virtue should meditate frequently on the Passion of Jesus.’—ST. BONAVENTURE.

ON this day the crucifixes, statues, etc., are veiled to express the deep mourning of the Church for the Passion and Death of her Spouse and Saviour. The whole of Lent is dedicated to our Lord’s Passion, but the last two weeks are in a more particular manner consecrated to honour that mystery. All through the week, in the Mass and other offices of the Church, the memory of His sufferings is daily renewed. The faithful ought in like manner to think on or to read some part of the Passion every day. We may consider Who He is that suffered, how much He suffered in various ways, from whom He suffered, for whom He suffered, and with what love, what generosity, what meekness, what zeal for His Father’s glory, what patience, what humiliations, what fortitude, and what obedience. These thoughts will come back to us again when we are suffering, and will prove a soothing balm.

Five *Paters* and *Aves* in honour of the five bleeding wounds of our Lord, three *Paters* and *Aves* in honour of His three hours' death agony on the cross, for all those in their agony, are suitable devotions at this time.

Friday this week is specially devoted to the sorrows of our Blessed Lady—the favourite of Heaven, and at the same time the Queen of Martyrs. Who will not find comfort in considering that, as Mary's sufferings prepared her for her glorious place in Heaven, so our sufferings are so many jewels to enrich our crowns in eternity? The *Stabat Mater* read or sung this day (Friday) will help us to enter into the spirit of the Church.

'Thy Cross, dear Lord, our only stay,  
We hail on this Thy Passion-day ;  
In loving hearts Thy grace increase,  
And sinners from their guilt release.'

*Example.*—EXECUTION OF A SOLDIER.

'On February 3, 1850, a soldier, Jean Guth, was condemned to death for the murder of his captain. On the morning of his execution, at about 3.30 a.m., I took him the Holy Viaticum. At four o'clock the prison van was at the door. He thanked the keeper for the kindness he had shown him. There were tears in many eyes. "Farewell, Guth," said the keeper; "die like a brave soldier and a good Christian." During the three hours and a half that the journey lasted his calmness never forsook

him. God was with him in that hour. "Our Lord is with us, my child," I said to him, "and if we have Jesus, we have everything." "Yes, yes," he answered, "I am quite content." And a moment afterwards: "I hardly like to say so, but I feel as if I were going to a wedding. God has permitted it all for my good to save my soul. It is a great consolation to me that my poor captain died a Christian death. I shall see him again; he is praying for me." He recited the Rosary, his eyes fixed with love upon the crucifix. "My God has saved me," he said; "I believe that He will be very merciful to me. He went up to Calvary carrying His cross. I am with Him, and, like Him, I will gladly submit to everything if they desire to bind me or bandage my eyes. . . . Soldiers are lost," he said again, "because they will not listen to you. Without you, without religion, the whole world would be lost." We passed close to the barracks where he had committed his crime. He said a prayer for the captain. "I cannot conceive what possessed me," he exclaimed; "I did not desire his death." And a minute after: "If by a single sin I could escape being shot, I would not commit it; that is what I feel. I have nothing left on earth; I am going home to God." At half-past seven we stopped in the plain of Satory, near Versailles. It was the field of the military manœuvres. We descended. Guth was pale, but composed. An officer read his sentence. "I recognize the justice of my

punishment," said the condemned; "I repent of my crime; I ask pardon from God, and I love Him with my whole heart." Then he knelt down. For the last time I gave him the crucifix to kiss. "Father," he repeated in a changed voice, "into Thy hands I commend my spirit. . . . I unite my death to that of Jesus my Saviour. Farewell! farewell!" I embraced him. He extended his arms in the form of a cross, and bent his head. An instant later human justice was satisfied, and the soul of the poor criminal, purified and transfigured by religion, entered into the bosom of Him Who pardons everything to the repentant sinner!—MGR. DE SÉGUR.

## PALM SUNDAY.

‘Behold, our King marcheth before us, Who will fight for us. Let us follow Him manfully ; let no one fear terrors ; let us go forward together. Jesus will be with us.’  
—*Imitation.*

THE last Sunday in Lent is called Palm Sunday, from the ceremony of blessing palm branches and distributing them to the faithful. In Catholic countries they are carried in the hands during the procession. We hold them in our hands during the reading of the Passion at Mass, and then take them home, as the Church invokes a blessing on those places to which they are taken. The whole ceremony is intended to commemorate the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, six days before His death. The Gospel narrative is as follows: ‘At that time Jesus drawing near Jerusalem, and being come to Bethphage, at Mount Olivet, He sent two of His disciples and said to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her; loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need



of them; and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion. Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus had commanded them and they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: *Hosanna* to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord' (Matt. xxi. 1-9).

Our Lord intended to show by His triumphal entry how by His death He would triumph over the devil, the world, and the flesh, and open Heaven to us. He made use of an ass to show how much He contemned human greatness, and to fulfil an eminent prophecy which had ages before pointed out the Messiah by such an approach to Jerusalem (Zach. ix. 9).

The learned, powerful, and rich did not join in the acclamations, thereby showing the danger of learning, power, and wealth, unless accompanied by humility, obedience, and detachment of heart.

The good dispositions of the crowd did not last long, for ere a week had passed the *Hosannas* were changed into '*Crucify Him!*' '*Away with*



*Him !* This shows us that we are not to depend on worldly applause, nor upon devotion, which comes only in fits and starts, but that we are constantly to implore God's strengthening grace, lest we desert Him in the time of danger.

Let us invite our dear Lord to reign over our hearts, and to keep our unruly passions under control.

' Hosanna to the Son of David ! Bring  
To Him Who cometh in God's name, our King,  
Glory and peace ! Loud, loud hosannas sing !'

*Example.*—GODFREY DE BOUILLON.

Godfrey de Bouillon, whose name is one of the glories of Belgium, was in his youth trained in Christian piety by his mother Ida, and in the use of arms by his father, who was a renowned warrior. When he had reached the years of manhood he possessed all the qualities of a great Prince and a Christian hero. Hence he was chosen to take command of the First Crusade, numbering about six hundred thousand men. Overcoming all difficulties and dangers, he succeeded in driving the infidels from the Holy Places, and soon entered Jerusalem at the head of his victorious army. Arrangements being made to proclaim him King of Jerusalem, and to crown him with a costly diadem of gold, he refused it, saying, 'God forbid that I should wear a crown of gold where the King of Kings wore a crown of thorns.'

## HOLY WEEK—THE TENEBRÆ.

‘He who exerciseth himself devoutly in the Passion of our Lord shall find abundantly all that is useful and necessary for him.’—*À KEMPIS.*

THE Office of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings in Holy Week is called *Tenebræ* (which signifies *darkness*), because in ancient times it was performed at midnight.

In the sanctuary we notice a large triangular candlestick. The highest candle represents Jesus Christ, Who said of Himself, ‘I am the Light of the world,’ and the rest represent the Apostles and disciples, to whom He was pleased to communicate His own prerogative of being the Light of the world (*Matt. v. 14*).

These candles are successively extinguished during the Office to represent how the Apostles fled and disappeared at the time of our Saviour’s Passion. Near the end the candle representing our Lord is not extinguished, but hidden behind or under the altar to represent His death. Immediately there is profound silence to signify the

horror of the Redeemer's death, followed by noise representing the earthquake and the confusion the world was in at that time.

The candlestick itself represents the Blessed Trinity, and the triangular arrangement of the candles gives us to understand that the light of truth which shone to the world from the life and doctrine of Christ and His disciples was derived from the same Blessed Trinity, and was intended to proclaim God's glory.

'The earth is darkened—rent the Temple's veil ;  
Now do the hearts of men with terror quail :  
Rend Thou my heart, O God, in this dread hour ;  
Break it with sweet contrition's holy power.'

*Example.*—COUNT ELZEAR.

The devout Count Elzear, despite the purity of his life, was blamed, calumniated, and otherwise badly treated even by his own subjects. Being asked one day by his wife Delphina how he could bear with indifference so many insults, he replied : 'Whenever I receive an injury from anyone, I immediately turn away my heart to consider the great affronts that were put upon the Son of God by His own creatures, and I say to myself : Even if they were to pluck thee by the beard, or to buffet thee, what would that be in comparison with what thy Divine Lord endured with so much patience ? Know, moreover, that sometimes in these cases I feel great movements of anger, but

then I fix my mind directly upon some corresponding injury that Jesus Christ once endured; nor do I let it wander from this consideration until I find that the inclination to anger has entirely passed away.'

## HOLY THURSDAY.

'O Sacred Banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given.'—ST. THOMAS.

THIS day is commemorative of the Last Supper, at which our Lord instituted the Blessed Eucharist. The Gospel says: 'And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat: This is My body. And taking the chalice He gave thanks: and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt. xxvi. 26-28).

All ought to assist at Holy Mass to-day, and receive Holy Communion out of love to our Lord, Who gave Himself to us as a most precious legacy on the very eve of His death.

The circumstances under which He instituted the Blessed Eucharist reveal His unbounded love. He instituted It 'the same night in which He was betrayed' (1 Cor. xi. 23), and therefore at the very time when the hatred of His enemies was at

its highest pitch, and when they were actually making their preparations to put Him to death. He instituted It though He knew that there was a vile traitor among His chosen followers, and that many Christians would despise and dishonour Him in this Sacrament.

At Mass to-day the priest consecrates a host to be reserved for the priest's communion to-morrow, there being, properly speaking, no Mass on Good Friday. This host is carried in solemn procession to the Altar of Repose, where it is kept till brought back in procession to the principal altar the following morning.

No bells are rung from the *Gloria in excelsis* till the same time on Saturday, to express the deep sorrow of the Church for the death of her Spouse.

After Mass the altars are uncovered, to put us in mind how Jesus, Whom the altar represents, was stripped of His garments at the time of His Passion; and therefore, while the priest uncovers them, he says the twenty-first Psalm, which is a clear prediction of our Saviour's Passion.

During the day devout worshippers are to be seen coming and going to pay their homage and adoration to the God of love, and to get in return the love of God.

These worshippers feel better than they can express the reality of the Divine Presence. If they are in grief, they find peace and consolation. If in danger and temptation, they feel, rather than



hear, Him say, 'It is I: fear not,' and their troubled bosoms enjoy a calm which is a foretaste of Heaven. Above all, they feel that their love is not misplaced, that it is not fruitless, that it is not followed by the emptiness of heart which succeeds the outpourings of love on created objects.

'No art or eloquence of man  
Can tell the joys of love ;  
Only the Saints can understand  
What they in Jesus prove.  
Come, then, dear Lord, possess my heart,  
Chase thence the shades of night ;  
Come, pierce it with Thy flaming dart  
And ever-shining light.'

*Example.*—DON GARCIA MORENO.

Moreno was re-elected President of Ecuador in 1869. During his term of office marvellous improvements were witnessed everywhere — in schools, in hospitals, the army and navy, finances, roads, railways, and especially in maintaining peace.

His last autograph letter was to the Holy Father Pius IX., announcing his re-election and begging the apostolic benediction. 'I have,' he wrote, 'the more need of the Divine protection now, since the Masonic lodges of the neighbouring states vomit out every kind of atrocious insult and infamous slander against me, and have actually taken means secretly to assassinate me.

What a happiness it is for me, most Holy Father, to be hated and calumniated for the love of our Divine Redeemer! What an immense blessing would it be for me if your benediction obtained for me grace to shed my blood for Him Who, being God, yet deigned to shed His blood for us on the Cross.'

On the first Friday in August he received, as was his custom, Holy Communion in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Some hours later, as he was passing the cathedral, he entered, and remained some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. His assassins, three in number, were dogging his steps, and, becoming impatient at his remaining so long in the church, they sent in word that some persons were waiting for him on important business.

He came out at once, and had already reached his palace when the first struck him with a heavy sword on the back of the neck. The President, fearless as ever, turned on the ruffian, when the two accomplices then rushed on him, and shot him many times with their revolvers and hacked him with their knives.

The troops, hearing the noise, rushed to the rescue, but it was too late. The President was mortally wounded. He was carried into the cathedral, where, after giving signs of consciousness and forgiveness of his assassins, he expired. His dying words were, 'GOD NEVER DIES!'





THE CRUCIFIXION.

*To face p. 47.*

## GOOD FRIDAY.

‘The Cross of Christ is not only a bed of death, but a pulpit of instruction.’—ST. AUGUSTINE.

THIS day is called *Good* because the Church keeps a solemn memorial of the infinite mercy and goodness which God showed to man in the death of His beloved Son. Our Saviour’s love for us was so great that He gave the last drop of His blood to save us. He rendered satisfaction for all men without exception, that all might be saved. Although this is a subject of joy to every Christian, still, we know that our joy cannot be pleasing to God unless we endeavour to participate in the merits of the Passion and Death of Christ by sorrow for our sins, by amendment and penance. Hence the touching ceremonies of to-day.

When we enter the church in the morning, we notice that the altars and sanctuary are bare. No candles are lighted, and the priest lies prostrate in front of the altar. After a few minutes he rises, and reads various lessons which are preparatory to the *Passion* as given by St. John.

Then, in imitation of her Spouse praying for His enemies when fastened to the Cross, the Church requires him to pray for all mankind—the Pope, the clergy, the faithful, and even for Jews and pagans.

Immediately after, divesting himself of the principal vestment, he takes the veiled cross in his hands and uncovers it by degrees, saying at the same time: ‘Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the Saviour of the world.’ Then, placing the Cross on one of the altar steps, he takes off his shoes, and genuflecting on both knees three times, he kisses the figure. The faithful approach and do the same. At the conclusion the candles are lighted, the Blessed Sacrament is brought back from the Altar of Repose, and the *Mass of the Presanctified* commences. When the Sacred Host is brought back to the altar, the priest incenses it and proceeds somewhat as usual till he reverently receives It, after which he immediately leaves the sanctuary, and the altars are again stripped.

In the afternoon the Stations of the Cross are generally gone through. Those who cannot attend ought to make them privately, as the benefit to the soul from meditating on our Saviour’s sufferings is very great, apart from the large number of indulgences attached to the pious exercise.

Another excellent practice is to take the crucifix in our hands, and to consider with pious affection



the sufferings of the different members of His Sacred Body. Kiss the crown of thorns, and beg of our Lord, through the sufferings He endured by this cruel torture, to aid you by His grace never to yield to bad thoughts of any kind. Kiss His hands pierced with nails, and beg Him to bless your hands, so that they may always be employed honestly and piously, and never be the instruments of sin. Kiss His feet, and ask Him for grace never to walk in the way of perdition. These will suggest other pious affections which will do much to increase our love for our Lord and horror for all that offends Him.

‘ Have we no tears to shed for Him,  
While soldiers scoff and Jews deride ?  
Ah ! look how patiently He hangs :  
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.’

*Example.*—ST. JOHN GUALBERT.

This Saint was not in his early years animated with truly Christian principles. His father had a mortal hatred for another gentleman who had murdered his cousin. He enlisted John's sympathy in his passion and projects of revenge. One day, as our future Saint was returning to Florence revolving in his mind various plans to bring about the death of the murderer, it happened that he met him at the turn of a narrow passage, and so suddenly that it was impossible for him to escape. Gualbert drew his sword, and was

about to plunge it into the breast of his enemy, who happened to be unarmed at the time, when the latter, descending from his horse, threw himself on his knees, and with his arms extended in the form of a cross, implored him to pardon him for the love of Jesus crucified. John was moved by the prayer. At the mention of Jesus Christ he remembered how our Lord, when fastened to the Cross, had pardoned and prayed for His enemies. Putting back his sword into the scabbard, the now changed man extended his hand and pardoned his enemy from the bottom of his heart. Afterwards continuing his journey, he made a visit to the church of the Abbey of San Miniato, where he found his heart so inflamed with the love of God and the desire for heavenly things that he renounced the world, and immediately asked admission to the abbey, where, his request being granted, he received the habit of St. Benedict, and later on became one of the glories of the Church.

## HOLY SATURDAY.

‘Prepare thou thyself to bear tribulations, and account them the greatest consolation ; for the sufferings of this life bear no proportion with the glory to come, although thou alone couldst suffer them all.’—*Imitation.*

THE ceremonies this morning are very long. Two things are necessary to be known in order to understand them: (1) In the early ages of the Church they commenced after sunset to-day and continued till sunrise on Easter Sunday; (2) the catechumens, or new converts, were assembled to-night for instruction previous to Baptism. The Paschal Candle represents Christ risen from the dead. Five grains of incense are fixed in it to represent the five wounds which He retained in His glorious body. During the blessing of the Candle, the Church, by the mouth of the priest, publishes the inestimable benefit of our redemption in the mysteries of Christ's death and resurrection; then she exhorts the faithful to celebrate the same with devotion; and afterwards, having presented to God and lighted the Candle, she

prays for all her children, and begs grace for them to spend Easter well.

The water for Baptism is blessed to-day, because this day and Whitsun Eve were formerly set apart for the baptism of the newly converted.

The bells are rung again at Mass, and the *Alleluia*, or 'Praise ye the Lord,' is repeated several times to express joy at the Resurrection.

Holy water is placed at the church doors to-day, and all ought to take some to their homes. A custom much to be recommended is to sprinkle our foreheads with holy water every morning before we go on our knees to thank God for bringing us through the dangers of the night, and to beg His blessing for the day; and to sprinkle our beds, making the Sign of the Cross over them, before retiring at night.

There is an indulgence for making the Sign of the Cross with holy water. When sprinkling ourselves, we ought also to make a short act of sorrow for our sins—*e.g.*, 'O my God! because Thou art so good, I love Thee, and am sorry for having offended Thee'; or the words of the Psalmist: 'Cleanse me, O Lord, and I shall be made whiter than snow.'

'The mists of sorrow may o'erspread us here,  
And cloud awhile the cheering light of day;  
Still faith discerns the sun which shall appear  
When earth's dim shadows shall have passed away.  
A glorious risen life of endless bloom  
Awaits us yet, whose portal is the tomb.'





THE ENTOMBMENT.



*Example.*—THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

Having become peaceable master of the empire, Constantine resolved to erect a magnificent temple to Jesus Christ on the very spot of His ignominious death. In 326 he committed the fulfilment of this intention to St. Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, directing Dracilianus, Governor of the province, to procure for the Bishop all the requisite workmen and materials, promising himself to send pillars, costly marbles, precious stones, gold, and all the ornaments necessary for making it the richest temple in the world.

Helena determined to take part in so glorious an undertaking. Not deterred by the fatigues of a long voyage, she set out at the age of seventy-nine for Palestine, to help in every way the great work of her son. The difficulties were such as would have daunted a less generous soul. How find the site of the Crucifixion and of the Sepulchre? To disfigure the place, the pagans had thrown upon the hill heaps of stones and rubbish. Subsequently, under Hadrian, they had erected there a statue to Jupiter, and built a temple to Venus, persuaded that the Christians, who abhorred the impure worship of that goddess, would thereby be for ever prevented from repairing thither to adore their crucified God.

By order of Helena, the statues and the infamous temple were demolished, and the materials carted away. On digging deeper, they at length came

to the Holy Sepulchre, and near it discovered many relics of the Crucifixion.

The church was built, and for centuries witnessed many changes, having passed from the Christians to the Persians, back again to the Christians, then to the Turks, afterwards to the Crusaders, back again to the Mussulmans, and finally to the Christians. It was very greatly damaged by fire, October 12, 1808, and rebuilt.

At present Catholics, Greeks, Armenians, Copts—in short, all Christian nations—have representatives, whose voices rise daily with incense towards that God Who sacrificed His only Son to save the world.





THE RESURRECTION.

*To face p. 55.*

## EASTER SUNDAY.

'We should reflect that the resurrection of Christ is an assured pledge of our own, and that our body, if we have laboured to sanctify it here below, will one day participate in the qualities of the glorified body of Jesus Christ.'—GROU.

THIS is the Christian Pasch, or *Passover*. The Jewish *Passover* commemorated their *passage* out of Egypt, and their deliverance from its slavery, and so was a type. Jesus Christ at His Resurrection *passed* from death to life, and by this passage triumphed over the powers of hell, rescued us from their tyranny and from eternal death, and opened a passage for us to eternal life. At that time 'Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the

right side clothed with a white robe; and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee: there you shall see Him, as He told you.\*

To celebrate this festival with due dispositions, we ought with joy and gratitude to adore Jesus Christ in His immortal state, and to rise with Him, by entering as He did upon a new life, so as never more to die by relapsing into sin, and to persevere in the practice of virtue and good works. We may know if we have entered on this new life—if we are at peace with God; if we love whatever leads to Him, such as prayer, reading good books, hearing the word of God, and assisting devoutly at Mass and other devotions. As we hope, too, that at the Last Day our bodies will rise and partake of the privileges of our Lord's glorious body, so we should respect our bodies, resist evil passions, and not use the members of our body for sinful purposes, but for the practice of good works.

'We, Lord, with faithful heart and cheerful voice,  
On this Thy glorious rising day rejoice :  
O Thou ! Whose conq'ring power o'ercame the grave,  
By Thy victorious grace us, sinners, save.'

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\* Mark xvi. 1-7.



*Example.*—LAMORICIÈRE.

Lamoricière's name stands prominently in the military history of France in the nineteenth century. His early intercourse with certain students of the Polytechnic School, and his almost constant engagement in warfare, dimmed for a time the lustre of the lofty Catholic principles instilled into him by a pious father. It is true he never lost the faith, but the smoke of the battle-field sometimes concealed it from his view. A period of forced rest, in which he could count no longer on outward victories, turned his thoughts to interior conquest, and thus he left an example of spiritual bravery which, while it excites our admiration, stimulates us to imitation. One day an old colleague and friend visited him and found him bent over maps, in which he was noting with anxiety the movements of the armies in the Crimea. To keep down the curled corners of the map he had employed the books which were the usual companions of his leisure hours—a Catechism, his Prayer Book, the 'Imitation,' and some other pious book. The visitor could not conceal his surprise at the sight of the four silent witnesses of the General's occupation. 'Well, yes,' said Lamoricière, 'that is my occupation. I do not wish to remain like you between day and night. I like to know where I go and by what I hold; and I make no secret of it.'

At an age when few seek to modify their long-

formed character and habits, he laboured diligently to soften and tone the asperities of his impetuous nature. Every day he became more patient, more indulgent to adversaries, and calmer under the many little annoyances with which this life is strewn. For instance, he was told that one of his best horses had broken its knees: some years before, the same matter had been made the signal for a storm, and the coachman trembled to think of what was coming; but to his astonishment the General was not even impatient. In his camp-life he had learned a somewhat free and dictatorial mode of speaking, and was much addicted to swearing; but these faults entirely disappeared.

When his son died he felt it very much, and what added to his grief was the fact that he could not be present. 'My God!' he exclaimed, 'You send us bitter trials in this world; I beseech You to be merciful to us in the next.'

Although not unexpected, Lamoricière's death was rather sudden. He died on his knees with the crucifix pressed to his breast, and received absolution while still conscious.

It would be well for the world to have many more such lives to record.

## ASCENSION THURSDAY.

‘Let us ascend in spirit with Christ, that when His day comes, we may follow with our body. Let us do this by trampling on our vices and evil inclinations ; thus building a ladder by which we can ascend.’—ST. AUGUSTINE.

OUR Lord remained forty days on earth after His Resurrection, to prove its truth, to encourage His Apostles, and to give them all the instruction necessary for the preaching of His Gospel and the organization of the infant Church. ‘And He led them out as far as Bethania : and lifting up His hands He blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst He blessed them, He departed from them and was carried up to Heaven. And while they were beholding Him going up to Heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said : Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven? This Jesus Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven. And they, adoring, went back into Jerusalem with great joy’\* (Acts i.).

\* Immediately after the Gospel the Paschal candle is extinguished and removed to represent Christ’s Ascension.

We ought to-day to think of our Lord in Heaven as our Mediator; to beg a share in the blessing He gave His disciples; to encourage ourselves to serve God faithfully by the prospect of Heaven; to train ourselves to look on this world as a place of banishment, and to raise our hearts towards our heavenly country, where Christ as our precursor entered on this day. Every time we say 'Our Father Who art in Heaven' we ought to think of our heavenly home, and to be determined to avoid everything that could prevent our reaching it.

There is in every human heart a craving for happiness. Men seek it by day and by night, yet are never satisfied, for all earthly happiness is limited both in measure and duration. It is strange that, though the heart is small, nothing but infinite happiness can satisfy it. That happiness—that satisfying happiness—will be found in Heaven, in the possession of a God Whose perfections are infinite. Surely this is worth striving for.

'Go, wing thy flight from star to star,  
From world to luminous world, as far  
As the universe spreads its flaming wall :  
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,  
And multiply each through endless years,  
One minute of Heaven is worth them all.'

*Example.*—BLESSED THOMAS MORE.

Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, having refused to take the Oath of Supremacy

and to join the schism of Henry VIII., was imprisoned in the Tower of London. One day, standing at the prison window with his daughter, they saw three Carthusian monks led forth to execution for denial of the Supremacy. 'See, Meg,' exclaimed her father, 'how these blessed men go forth to their deaths, as cheerful as bridegrooms to their marriage. Surely God thinketh not thy silly father worthy of so quick release.'

Some time after, his wife obtained leave to visit him. As she entered his chamber she saluted him thus: 'What, Mr. More! I marvel that you, who are accounted a wise man, should play the fool, and choose to abide in this filthy prison among rats and mice, when you might be abroad at your liberty, if you would but do as others have done. And, seeing that you have a right goodly house at Chelsea, I wonder why in God's name you tarry here longer.' 'Alice,' replied Sir Thomas, 'tell me this one thing: Is not this house as near Heaven as my own?' She then tried what affection could do. She begged him in the most moving accents not to abandon a wife who adored him, children to whom he was never so necessary as at present, his country, his fortune, and, in fine, his life, which was now at its brightest, only for himself.

Sir Thomas then asked her how long she thought he might live if set free. 'At least twenty years, and perhaps thirty,' she replied. 'Twenty or thirty years,' replied the great man.



‘What is that, or even all time, compared with eternity?’

As it was felt that more would be gained by his recantation than by his death, many more attempts were made to shake his resolution; but all were fruitless. A few thoughts or prayers scratched on the walls of his dungeon, or written with coal on scraps of paper, have been preserved—*e.g.*, ‘Who would save his life to displease God? If thou so savest thy life, how deadly wouldst thou hate it on the morrow, and feel heavy at thy heart that thou hadst not died the day before. The moment approaches when thou shalt rejoice with Christ in the revelation of His glory.’

Early on the morning of July 6 he got word that he was to die at 9 a.m. So joyously did he receive the news that he changed his apparel, putting on a silk gown, for he would fain go forth to his death as to a banquet. On his way to the block an acquaintance offered him a drink of wine, which he refused, saying: ‘Christ at his Passion drank no wine, but vinegar and gall.’ Arrived at the place of execution, he knelt down, said the *Miserere*, and having made some pleasant remarks, received the blow which ushered his soul into the presence of his Maker.



## WHIT SUNDAY.

‘From the Holy Spirit springs a never-ending joy, the likening unto God.’—ST. BASIL.

PENTECOST with the Jews was a feast in memory of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, amidst thunder and lightning, fifty days after their deliverance out of Egypt. Their feast was a type of ours, for on this day the Holy Ghost wrote the New Law, amidst a new kind of noise and fire, in the hearts of the faithful disciples, and by their mouths published it to the world. ‘When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under Heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the

multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these, that speak, Galileans? and how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God' (Acts ii. 1-11).

The Holy Ghost came in the form of fire to denote that He is a spiritual fire which enlightens the soul, purifies and inflames the heart, consumes what is vicious in it, and raises, consecrates, and sacrifices it to God.

He assumed the shape of tongues to express how He inspired the Apostles with knowledge and zeal, in order to enlighten and inflame the minds of men, and to preach the Gospel of Christ to all the world.

Three thousand were converted by St. Peter's first sermon, and five thousand by his second. These first-fruits of the Gospel gave themselves at once to the practice of the evangelical doctrine of Christ, and so became models of sanctity. They loved one another so that they all seemed to have but one heart and soul.

The pagans, astonished at this, exclaimed: 'See

how the Christians love one another!' They lived in common, selling all they had, and giving the price to the Apostles to be distributed according to each one's necessities. They rejoiced in sufferings and privations for the sake of Christ. They met daily to pray, to receive instruction, and to partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord.

Not less remarkable was the change in the Apostles themselves. Before the descent of the Holy Ghost they were ignorant and fearful, but after, they were so enlightened as to be able to explain all the Scriptures and Divine mysteries; so courageous as to proclaim openly Christ's Resurrection, which they confirmed by astonishing miracles, and by suffering persecution and death itself in testimony of the truths they preached.

We ought, on this great feast, to beg the Holy Ghost to imprint on our hearts the Law of God and the maxims of Jesus Christ; to give us a lively faith in, and a great love for, them, and courage to confess them by a life in conformity with their teaching. We ought also to resolve to imitate the lives of the first Christians by resignation in suffering, sincere love of our neighbour, assiduity in prayer, attention to the Word of God, alms-giving, and the frequentation of the Sacraments, and thus show ourselves worthy children of our Holy Mother the Church.

: Refine and purge our earthly parts :

But, O, inflame and fire our hearts !

Our frailties help, our vice control,  
Submit the senses to the soul ;  
And when rebellious they are grown,  
Then lay Thy hand, and hold them down :  
Make us eternal truths receive,  
And practise all that we believe.'

*Example.*—ST. POLYCARP.

St. Polycarp, disciple of the Apostle St. John, and Bishop of Smyrna, suffered martyrdom under Marcus Aurelius. The Proconsul Quadratus caused him to be arrested and brought before him as being a chief propagator of a religion prohibited by the Emperor. He had his tribunal erected in an amphitheatre. Polycarp stood before him, in the presence of an immense multitude of pagans, who, in spite of their hatred for the Christians, could not help admiring him, being so venerable, and having such a sweet majesty and holy joy in his features.

'Polycarp!' said the Proconsul, 'swear by the fortune of Cæsar, and curse Christ.' The holy man replied, smiling: 'For eighty-six years I have served this good Master, and I have received nothing but benefits from Him. What odious ingratitude it would be, then, to blaspheme Him! Ah! I will bless Him till my last sigh, and I am happy to be able to glorify Him by declaring that I am a Christian.'

A few minutes later the public crier said: 'Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian.'

All the multitude demanded that he should be burned alive. In a short time the stake and fire were ready. Polycarp divested himself of his principal garments, and then, mounting the faggots, he offered himself to God as a holocaust, and recited the following prayer: 'Receive, O Father Eternal, the life which Thou hast given me. I thank Thee for deigning to number me among Thy martyrs, and for making me a sharer in the chalice and sufferings of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I praise Thee, I glorify Thee, I bless Thee with Thy only Son, Who is the Sovereign Priest and Eternal Pontiff, Who livest and reignest with Thee and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.'

Amidst wonderful miracles, and the admiration of the spectators, his glorious soul went unto the bosom of the Eternal Father, January 26, A.D. 169.



## CORPUS CHRISTI.

‘Even if we open the heavens, and look into the Heaven of heavens, we shall find there nothing more holy, nothing greater than what Jesus Christ Himself has placed upon our altars.’—ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

THESE two words, *Corpus Christi*, mean *Body of Christ*. The feast kept on the first Thursday after the octave of Pentecost was established to commemorate and give thanks for that great mystery of love which Christ left us at His last supper, when, consecrating the bread and wine, He gave us His Body and Blood under those appearances, for the remembrance of His Passion, for the comfort of His Church, as an agreeable sacrifice to His Heavenly Father, and a most precious food to nourish our souls.

Holy Thursday would seem at first sight to be the proper time for this celebration, but the Church, being then taken up in contemplating the sufferings of her Spouse, thought fit to postpone the joyful commemoration of the institution of so amiable a mystery.

We ought to celebrate this great feast and its



octave by strengthening our faith in this mystery by receiving Holy Communion with unusual fervour; by taking part in the procession, if held in our locality; by contributing flowers, etc., for the decorations; and by frequent visits to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, to pour out our souls in acts of adoration, gratitude, love and petition for ourselves and others.

We should try and go to Benediction also. This is a ceremony which gives us an opportunity of making public profession of our faith by acts of adoration. It excites us to an increase of love and confidence, by reminding us that it is for love of us that He dwells in our tabernacles. When the priest makes the Sign of the Cross over us with the Blessed Sacrament in his hands, let us beg God's grace and blessing on our souls, and particularly for strength to carry our cross after Him, and to fulfil the duties of our state in life.

Practices like these will increase our faith and devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and we shall then experience the blessedness of conversing familiarly with Him as a friend, and we shall enjoy the peace which surpasseth understanding.

'Jesu ! Whom for the present veiled I see,  
What I so thirst for, O, vouchsafe to me ;  
That I may see Thy countenance unfolding,  
And may be blest Thy glory in beholding.'

*Example.*—CORPUS CHRISTI IN PARAGUAY.

The Christian converts of the *Reductions* of Paraguay, so flourishing in the eighteenth century, animated by the spirit of fervour which distinguished the early Christians, solemnized the Feast of Corpus Christi with all the pomp which their piety, aided by their resources, could suggest. They adorned the church and all the roads which the procession was to pass. Being only reclaimed savages, their decorations were entirely rustic; but they were in such variety and profusion as to vie with our most expensive ornaments at home. Waving palms, scented laurels and myrtles, blooming orange-trees, intermingled with wreaths and festoons of beautiful flowers and fruits, lined the streets, while triumphal arches spanned the larger spaces. The caciques furnished peacocks, parrots, and other birds of gorgeous plumage, which, tied by a string, flitted gaily over the heads of the processionists. Here and there stags and wild beasts were tied to stakes, or caged. All kinds of creatures were brought to render homage to their Creator. The air was laden with perfumes from odoriferous herbs strewn on the way.

After Mass, at which nearly every one received Communion, the procession was formed in European fashion.

A few companies of soldiers led the way, to the sound of many musical instruments unknown to us, and occasional discharges of musketry. Next

came the men, afterwards the women. The vicegerent, chiefs, captains, judges, and other officials preceded or accompanied the Blessed Sacrament. Different choirs and bands alternated in sacred melodies, and pious enthusiasm pervaded the whole.

When the ceremony was over, the fowl, fruits, and vegetables were given to the strangers, or set aside for invalids. Those who came from a distance were hospitably entertained. Several conversions generally followed so edifying a spectacle.

## THE PURIFICATION.

FEBRUARY 2.

‘I hail thee, O Mary, full of grace, in whose arms a God immolates Himself to a God.’

THIS is a double feast—viz., our Lord’s Presentation in the Temple and our Lady’s Purification. ‘After the days of the purification of Mary according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Jesus to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male child opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. And to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was with him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when His parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for

Him according to the custom of the law, he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said : Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace. Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples : a light to the revelation of the gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. And his father and mother were wondering at these things, which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother : Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser ; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years ; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord ; and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel ' (Luke ii. 22-38).

This presentation of the first-born was commanded by God to keep the Jews in mind how, when their forefathers were delivered by Him out of Egypt, He caused the first-born of the Egyptians to be killed, whilst theirs were saved. From this



we see that the Almighty expects us to be mindful of, and grateful for, His benefits to us.

The purification of women was ordained to acknowledge, by an expiatory sacrifice, the unhappy impurity of our birth since the fall of Adam. These laws did not bind Jesus and Mary in the least, for He was the Son of God, and the Blessed Virgin conceived of the Holy Ghost, and was delivered of her only-begotten Son, without prejudice to her virginal integrity. They submitted to the law because, as our Saviour's miraculous conception and birth were secrets, not as yet ripe for revelation, both the Mother and the Son were, in the eyes of the world, bound by the law.

We ought on this feast to consider in detail the events as regards Jesus, Mary, Simeon, and Anna, and try to imitate their virtues. In union with the Divine Child we ought, especially during holy Mass, to offer ourselves to our Heavenly Father, to do His will on all occasions. From the Blessed Virgin we ought to learn humility, exact obedience to the laws of God and His Church, and particularly to avoid giving scandal. Old Simeon teaches us to sigh earnestly for Jesus Christ, to follow Him as 'our Way, our Truth, and our Life' (John xiv. 6), and to detach our hearts from this world. From Anna we can learn to love to speak to God in the church.

Parents and guardians ought on this day to offer up their children to God in union with the



offering Christ made of Himself, and to train them to make this offering themselves also.

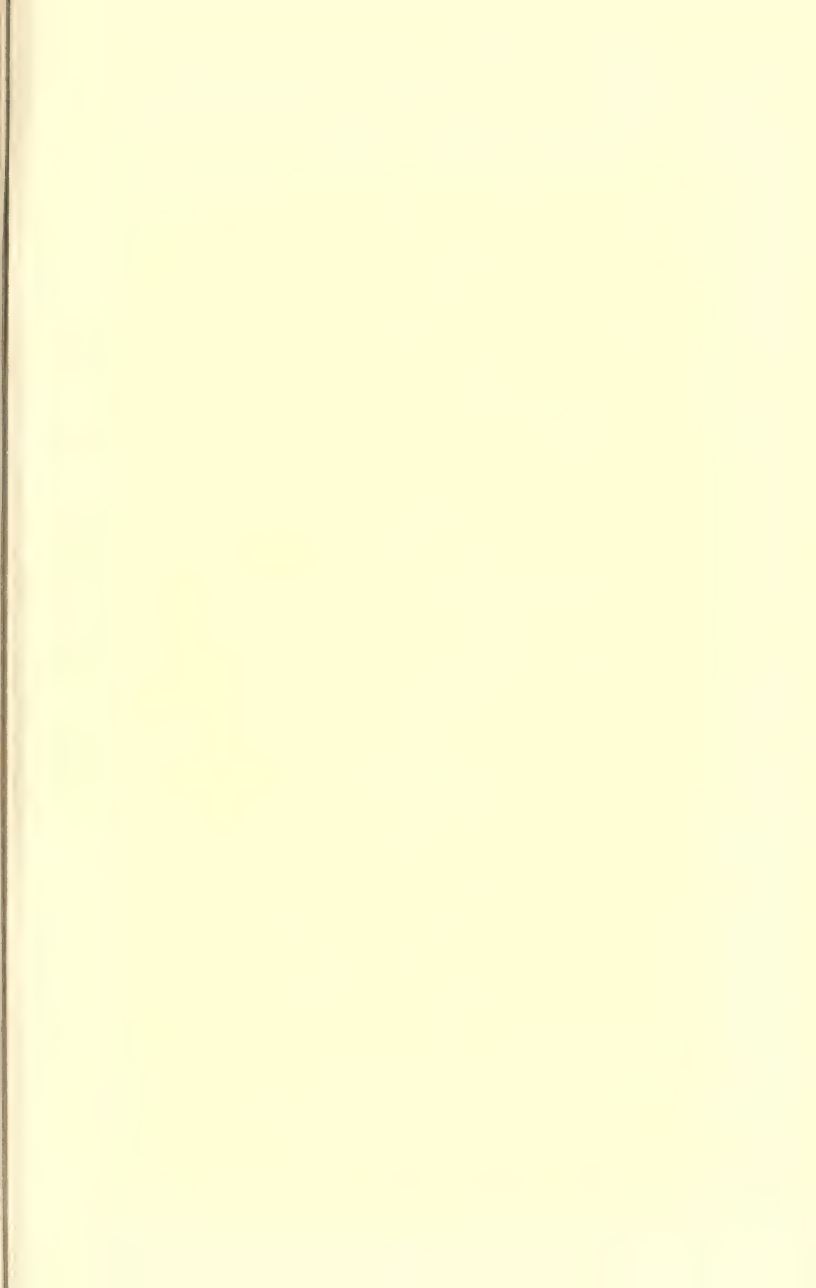
This feast is also called Candlemas Day, from the blessing and distributing of candles to show belief in Jesus Christ, 'the Light of the world.' In blessing these candles the Church, by her ministers, begs of God that those who use them with faith in His Name and power may obtain His assistance against temporal and spiritual evils, and against the snares of the devil. Hence there should be a blessed candle lighted, particularly when a person is in the agony of death.

'Naught can hurt the pure in spirit,  
Who upon Thine aid rely ;  
At Thy hand secure of gaining  
Strength and mercy from on high.  
Safe beneath Thy mighty shelter,  
Though a thousand hosts combine,  
All must fall or flee before us,  
Scattered by an arm Divine.'

*Example.*—ST. ANDREW CORSINI.

The family of Corsini was one of the most illustrious in Florence. Our Saint was the fruit of the prayers of his pious parents, who consecrated him by vow to God before his birth. But notwithstanding the care his parents took to instil good principles into him, he spent the first part of his youth in vice and extravagance, in the company of such as were as wicked as himself. His devout mother Peregrina never ceased weep-

ing and praying for his conversion, and one day said to him, with many sighs in the bitterness of her grief, 'I see you are the wolf I saw in my sleep,' giving him to understand that, before his birth, she had dreamt of bringing forth a wolf, which, running into a church, was turned into a lamb. She added that she and her husband had in a particular manner consecrated him before his birth to the service of God, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and that, in consequence of his being born not for them nor for the world, but for God, a very different kind of life from what he led was expected from him. This discourse made so strong an impression on his heart that he went immediately to the church of the Carmelite Friars, and having prayed there for some time with great fervour before the altar of our Lady, he was so touched by God, that he resolved at once to join the Order. He was admitted, and after many years of zealous labour for his own sanctification and that of others, he was chosen to be Bishop of Fiesole, where he died in the odour of sanctity.





ST. PATRICK.

*To face p. 77*

## ST. PATRICK.

MARCH 17.

‘May my Lord avert that it should ever come to pass that I should lose His people, whom He has gained at the ends of the earth.’—ST. PATRICK.

WHEN we consider the immense spiritual harvest which resulted from the labours of this great Saint, we naturally ask, ‘Whence did it come?’ The study of his life will answer, ‘From God, through prayer’; and this answer will but echo the truths so often expressed in Holy Scripture: ‘Without Me you can do nothing’ (John xv. 5); ‘I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me’ (Phil. iv. 13); ‘Ask, and you shall receive’ (John xvi. 24), etc.

While yet a boy, as a captive, Patrick tended flocks and herds on the mountains of Antrim. Christianity not having been yet introduced, there were no churches to which he could repair for comfort and strength in his trials, so he made a temple of the field, and in all sorts of weather poured out his soul to his Creator by night and day.

Some years later he escaped, and got back to his own country, whence, after years of study and training, he returned to Ireland as a Bishop, having been sent by Pope St. Celestine.

Amidst unceasing labours, he still continued his life of prayer, knowing that the planting of the seed is useless unless the Lord watereth and giveth the increase. This was the way in which he offered violence to Heaven, and obtained such abundant grace on his labours.

He not only converted the entire island, but established the Faith so firmly amongst its inhabitants that the efforts of hell, tyrants, persecutions, and bribes were powerless in their efforts to uproot it.

Another peculiarity of our Saint's life was that he inspired the race with an apostolic spirit, so that there is scarce a nation on the face of the globe where the sons and daughters of Erin are not labouring to maintain or spread the Faith, or at least have done so in the past.

Besides the Faith, St. Patrick left a rich legacy by his example, not only to his children, but to all Christians. He shows us that prayer is possible and beneficial in all states: in prosperity and in adversity, in labour and in rest, in youth and in old age.

The Providence of God is particularly shown by making his captivity in early life—apparently a misfortune—a training for the apostolic life later on; by giving him an opportunity of learning



the language and manners of the people; by accustoming him to fatigue; and, above all, by giving so many opportunities of communing with the Almighty in the solitude of the mountains. No one ever yet became an apostle who did not first know God by earnest and frequent prayer, which is altogether a different thing from knowing Him through the study of books.

Let us, then, ask St. Patrick to obtain for us the spirit of prayer, a habit of frequently raising our hearts to God by such aspirations as, 'My God, I love Thee,' 'Thy will be done.' Resolve, too, to recognize the holy will of God in even the ordinary events of life, such as accidents, disappointments, failures, etc.

'Lo! their infant arms extending,  
Erin's children craved his aid;  
To their wants the Saint attending,  
Soon their heavenly call obeyed.  
Pagan priests, their dark delusion  
Long had o'er Hibernia spread;  
Patrick came—and in confusion  
Demons from his presence fled.'

*Example.*—DR. O'HURLEY OF CASHEL.

Dermot O'Hurley, son of an Irish knight, was born in Limerick, his mother's name being O'Brien. After an excellent training from his pious parents, he pursued a distinguished course in the Universities of Paris and Louvain. In Rome he attracted the attention of Gregory XIII.,

who appointed him to the See of Cashel. At that time Queen Elizabeth was carrying out a most relentless persecution of Catholics. Her officials surpassed her in cruelty. In order to escape their spies he went about amongst his flock in disguise, and succeeded for a few years, thanks to the fidelity of those to whose spiritual wants he ministered. He was at length arrested, and hurried off to Dublin, and kept there in chains in a dark and loathsome prison for about six months, whence he was led before the Lords Justices Loftus and Wallop. At first they received him kindly, and promised a free pardon and promotion if he denied the spiritual power of the Pope and acknowledged the Queen's supremacy. He answered that he had resolved never to abandon for any temporal reward the Catholic Church, the Vicar of Christ, and the true Faith. Seeing that promises failed, they had recourse to frivolous arguments. These failing also, torture was resorted to. The holy prelate was then bound to the trunk of a tree, with his hands and feet chained, and his legs forced into long boots reaching to the knees. The boots were filled with salt, grease, oil, hemp, and pitch, and his legs were then burned in a fire for over an hour. The pitch and other materials boiled over. The skin was torn off his feet, and large pieces of flesh, so that his bones were laid bare. When the boots were pulled off no one could bear to look at him. Still the holy

martyr, notwithstanding these tortures, kept his mind fixed on God, and never uttered a complaint, but submitted with a serene countenance. He was ordered back to the same foul prison to make him suffer still greater torments. A few weeks later instructions were sent to have him executed immediately, as it was rumoured that efforts were being made to obtain his release. Lest there should be any demonstration, he was carried to the place of execution before daybreak, where, to make the death struggle more painful, he was hanged by means of a rope made of twigs, only three of his flock being present. His body was secured by a citizen of Dublin, and interred in consecrated ground, June 7, 1584.

## THE ANNUNCIATION.

MARCH 25.

‘God could not, great though He is, elevate a mother, as mother, to a higher dignity than that to which he raises Mary, in the Incarnation, by making her Mother of God.’—  
ST. BONAVENTURE.

THIS is a double feast—viz., the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. ‘At that time the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the

Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word' (Luke i. 26-38).

The consideration of the great mystery of the Incarnation must impress on us deeply the profound humility of Christ, for, being equal to His Father and one God with Him, He in a manner annihilated Himself in becoming man.

We also learn His perfect obedience, His great love for man, His hatred for sin, His contempt for worldly greatness, and His admiration for chastity.

Almighty God required Mary's consent, that her obedience might atone for the disobedience of Eve. We learn from the Gospel narrative the points of contrast between the first and the second Eve. Eve was tempted by a bad angel; Mary



was saluted by a good one. Eve, yielding to the temptation, disobeyed God; Mary obeyed Him by believing the angel. Eve presented to Adam the fruit of death; Mary has given us the Fruit of life. Eve began our ruin, Mary our salvation.

Let us congratulate Mary not only as being the choice of God to be the mother of His Son, but on her perfect correspondence with such a sublime vocation.

Let us, like her, be modest, pious, and humble. Be proud of such a mother, and endeavour to have a childlike confidence in her. The *Hail Mary* and the *Angelus* are the prayers said specially in honour of the Incarnation and Annunciation. Let us be faithful and fervent in their recital.

'O ! by Gabriel's *Ave*,  
Utter'd long ago,  
Eva's name reversing,  
'Stablish peace below.  
Show thyself a mother ;  
Offer Him our sighs,  
Who for us Incarnate  
Did not thee despise.'

*Example.*—ST. TERESA.

St. Teresa writes as follows in her life : ' When my mother died I remember I was about twelve years old. Full of grief, I went to a church of our Lady, and threw myself at the feet of her image. I conjured her with many tears to be henceforth a mother to me. This sincere, simple



cry from a child's heart was heard. I felt confident I had a mother in the Queen of Heaven. Since that moment I have never recommended myself to this gracious Virgin without experiencing in a striking manner her all-powerful help ; and if I have come back from my wanderings, my return has been her work.'

## SS. PETER AND PAUL.

JUNE 29.

‘I think of thee, Peter, and I stand amazed: and as I bring thee, Paul, before my mind, I am lost in thought and give way to my tears.’—ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

ST. PETER was a poor fisherman called by Jesus Christ to be, under Himself, the head of the Church militant. In conformity with the dignity conferred on him by our Divine Saviour, the Fathers of the Church in all ages have called him in their writings *Prince* of the Apostles, *Supreme* teacher of the Church, and the pastor entrusted with the charge of the *whole* flock.

After governing the Church from Antioch for some years, he removed his See to Rome, being the capital of the Empire, which then practically was the world. After twenty-five years’ apostolic labour, he was arrested and crucified. Deeming himself unworthy to suffer in the same posture as his Divine Master, he requested that he might suffer head downwards, and it was granted.

St. Peter having fixed his See in Rome, and

having gloriously died for the faith there, the Church of Rome was established the mother of all others, and chief guardian of the Divine truths. All are obliged to hold communion with her, and to render sincere obedience to the successor of St. Peter.

From the example of this glorious Saint we can learn a great spirit of faith, humility, and penance, confidence in Divine mercy, and mistrust of self.

‘But, gracious God ! how well dost Thou provide  
For erring judgments an unerring guide.  
Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,  
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight :  
O teach me to believe Thee, thus concealed,  
And search no farther than Thyself revealed,  
But Her alone for my director take,  
Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake.’

St. Paul was a learned Pharisee who, from a persecutor of the infant Church, was miraculously changed by Jesus Christ into a glorious Apostle, and appointed to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. ‘And Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues ; that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus ; and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him : And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him :

Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me? And he said: Who art Thou, Lord? And He: I am Jesus, Whom thou dost persecute: it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he, trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice but seeing no one. And Saul arose from the ground; and his eyes being open, he saw nothing: but they, leading him by the hands, brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days without sight, and he neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, by name Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias. And he said: Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the street that is called Straight; and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth. But Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how great evils he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke Thy name. And the Lord said to him: Go; for this man is a vessel of election to Me, to carry My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for the sake of My name. And Ananias went his way, and entered

into the house ; and laying his hand on him, he said : Saul, brother, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He who appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales ; and he received his sight : and rising up, he was baptized. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God' (Acts ix. 1-20).

After extraordinary labours and sufferings, he was beheaded at Rome, leaving us an example of unlimited, compassionate, and disinterested charity for all, and an ardent zeal for the salvation and sanctification of souls.

We can admire the wonderful ways of our Lord, and excite a great confidence in His mercy, seeing that He made choice of the one who denied Him and the one who persecuted Him to be the main pillars of His Church.

On this day we ought to pray fervently for the Pope and the entire Church, and for the grace of conversion for those nations who are yet separated from the Chair of St. Peter by the darkness of paganism, schism, or heresy.

' Divine religion, though the powers of earth  
Combined with hell to crush thee in thy birth ;  
Though streamed in every clime thy martyrs' blood,  
Against thy law though error boldly stood,  
Disturbed thy peace, and rent thy seamless vest,  
And aimed the dagger at thine holy breast,



Thou still dost triumph ; still thy sacred bark,  
While all around is ruin, like the ark,  
Magnificently rising with the surge,  
Shall live triumphant o'er the general scourge.'

*Example.*—ST. FLAVIUS.

In the reign of the Emperor Domitian there was in Rome a Christian named Flavius Clemens, illustrious by rank and fortune. He held the office of Consul, and was a near relative of the Emperor. When, some years before, in the time of Nero, the Apostles Peter and Paul preached in Rome, Flavius, having heard them, was struck with the sanctity of their lives and the sublimity of their doctrine. As he was a man of upright mind and heart, he wished to get a full account of Christian teaching, and so had several interviews with St. Paul. The light of the true faith illuminated his mind, and he asked to be baptized. 'What would you do,' said St. Paul to him, 'if Nero demanded your return to the worship of the gods of the Empire?' 'When one has recognized Jesus Christ as the true Son of God,' replied Flavius, 'it is no longer possible to return to idols. Sooner than deny Him, I would sacrifice everything most dear to me.' Later on, in the persecution of Domitian, this great man was condemned to death. The announcement was a shock to Rome. It was a thing unheard of that a Senator should die in the cause of religion. When Flavius entered the amphitheatre clothed



in his toga, not a single cry was heard. All looked with respectful silence on the venerable man, who approached death with a serene countenance. He knelt down, raised his eyes to Heaven, and received the fatal blow. A subdued murmur passed through the throng of spectators. 'Surely,' said they, 'the God for Whom one dies thus must be the true God.'

## THE ASSUMPTION.

AUGUST 15.

‘The Assumption is the feast *par excellence* of the Blessed Virgin, and claims pre-eminence among all her festivals, in that it sets forth to us her glory, her reward, her triumph.’  
—SUAREZ.

THIS is the crowning feast of our Blessed Lady. On this day the Church celebrates her departure from this world, and the triumphant entrance into Heaven, not only of her soul, but, according to pious belief (though not of faith), of her body also. Try and imagine the respect, honour, and admiration with which she was received by the whole heavenly court. Words fail us when we try to express with what love and graciousness the Most Holy Trinity welcomed her; how the Father received her as His daughter, the Son as His mother, and the Holy Ghost as His spouse.

What does Mary do for us from the heights of Heaven? She intercedes for us, she pleads our cause, she obtains and distributes heavenly favours. She is a queen of mercy. Her power equals her

goodness. Let us, therefore, pray to her in all our wants of body and soul. Let us, above all, implore her to obtain for us a good death, and that constant fidelity to grace which will procure it.

If we are really anxious to be devout to our Blessed Mother, and to obtain her protection, we must strive daily to rid ourselves of sin, which offends her Divine Son, and, moreover, earnestly endeavour to imitate her virtues—viz., her love for God, her humility, purity, patience, and conformity with the Divine Will.

‘Look down on us thy children,  
O Mother dear! look down;  
The Mother’s face beams kindly  
When other faces frown.  
Though thou art Queen of Heaven,  
And reign’st in joy above,  
Yet still, O dearest Mother!  
Look down on us with love.’

*Example.*—ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.

One day this amiable Saint was asked if he loved the Virgin Mary. Immediately his face flushed and beamed with angelic sweetness, and raising his eyes towards Heaven, he replied: ‘She is my mother; what can I say more?’

Later on, in his eighteenth year, speaking to Father Emmanuel Sa about the Feast of the Assumption, which was approaching, he exclaimed, ‘O Father, what a happy day for the Saints when our Lady entered Heaven! I feel confident that

they celebrate the memory of it every year, and I hope to be present the next time.' His youth and good health prevented any serious notice being taken of his remark. Shortly after he began to show signs of weakness, then got so ill that he received the last Sacraments on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption. When asked if he was willing to die or live, according to God's holy will, he replied, 'My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.' He then lay peacefully, with his eyes raised to Heaven or towards an image of our Lady, which he pressed to his lips frequently. After midnight he began to fail fast. Suddenly his face changed, and a wonderful radiance rested on it as he gazed on our Lady, who appeared to him surrounded by a number of virgins, who came to bear his soul to Paradise. As the sun rose on the Feast of the Assumption he breathed his last, surrounded by the Father and Brothers, who shed abundant tears as they kissed his hands and feet reverently.

## ALL SAINTS.

NOVEMBER I.

‘Look upon the lively examples of the holy fathers, in whom true perfection and religion were most shining, see how little and almost nothing that is which we do.’—*Imitation.*

THIS feast was instituted to honour God in all His Saints, there being but few of them who can have a special feast, as the number of days in the year is limited. On this day we may expect to obtain great favours, as our intercessors will be very numerous. We will also be more encouraged in the practice of virtue by the united examples of Saints of both sexes, of all ages and conditions. We ought to remember especially that the Saints had the same difficulties as we have, and in most cases greater ones, to contend with; and that we have the same helps which enabled them to subdue their passions and to practise virtue. These helps are the merits of Christ, the inspirations of His Holy Spirit, the intercession of the Saints, the Sacraments, read-

ing and hearing the word of God, good example, and the trials and successes of life.

We ought on this day to thank God for having provided for us a place amongst the Saints, and beg of Him all the graces necessary to secure such a happiness. Let us often, too, say with St. Ignatius: 'How contemptible the things of this earth when I consider those of Heaven!'

The 'Lives of the Saints' are now within the reach of all, through the zeal of the Catholic Truth Society and similar organizations, and parents will do well to put these 'Lives' in the hands of their children as soon as they can read them. They ought, also, to show them the example by devoting a certain time each week to pious reading.

' Saints are they who know their task,  
Hold their ground by fighting firm ;  
Strength for life's long warfare ask,  
And await its destined term.  
When the tempter seeks your door,  
Use the grace which God has given ;  
If 'tis scanty, ask for more—  
You'll be saints yourselves in Heaven.'

*Example.*—ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA.

Ignatius, commanding the garrison at the siege of Pampeluna, was wounded and carried to the castle of Loyola. Finding time to weigh very heavily during his convalescence, he asked for some romances. Fortunately, there were none



in the castle, so they brought him the 'Life of Christ' and the 'Lives of the Saints.' These he rejected with disgust, as his thoughts were entirely engrossed by the stirring deeds of chivalry. However, pressed by the weariness of enforced idleness, he read the books to kill time, and afterwards through curiosity. Insensibly he got an affection for them, and in a short time spent entire days absorbed in them. The first effect was admiration for the Saints' love of solitude and sufferings; then he was struck with their wisdom in seeking eternal rather than temporal goods; finally, he felt a great desire to imitate them. 'Why,' said he to himself, 'cannot I follow their example? Cannot I do what they have done? These men who had such control over themselves and their passions, were they made of bronze or stone? Were they of a different nature from me? What can the world give me as a reward for my services, for the blood I have shed? God, God alone deserves that my life be consecrated to Him. It is for Him that I will henceforth do what I have been foolishly doing for creatures up to this.' Thus were salutary impressions made on his mind. We know how generously he corresponded with them, and how, later on, he became the founder of the great Jesuit Order, and the fruitful leader of an army of Saints.

## THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

DECEMBER 8.

‘It was in prescience of the divine maternity that God exempted her, not only from original sin, but also from the obligation of contracting it.’—LALLEMANT.

ON this day we commemorate the fact of our Lady’s conception without the stain of original sin. When we consider her eminent destiny—to be mother of God Incarnate—we are not surprised that she should be made the exception of the human race. God having taken entire possession of her from the moment that He created her soul and united it to her body, she was freed from concupiscence, and ever after exempt from the least fault, being always careful, not only to preserve this grace, but to merit an increase thereof, by faithfully corresponding with it.

We ought, in like manner, to use all possible care to preserve in our souls the sanctifying grace which we received in Baptism, or recovered by the Sacrament of Penance, that we may imitate the Blessed Virgin in the esteem she had of



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

*To face p. 92.*



Divine grace. If Christians could only realize what it is to lose the grace of God, what it is to be His enemy, they would not so easily commit or remain in mortal sin.

Often, then, let us ask ourselves if we, like Mary, have a horror of deliberate sin. Do we, like her, dread it above all evils, and value purity of conscience above all treasures, glories, and gratifications?

Another thought that this feast suggests is, that if the Divine Goodness was pleased to bestow so many and such great privileges upon Mary because she was to become the mother of Jesus, because she was to conceive and bear in her chaste womb the Immaculate Lamb, what ought to be our sanctity, our innocence, our purity, when we approach the Holy Table, and there receive into our hearts the same Body and Blood, now no longer capable of suffering, but glorious and immortal!

A suitable and profitable practice of piety is to say three 'Hail Marys' every morning, followed by the ejaculation 'O Mary! through thy Immaculate Conception obtain for me purity and sanctity of soul and body,' or 'O Mary! conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.'

'And, if our Faith had given us nothing more  
Than this example of all womanhood,  
So mild, so merciful, so strong, so good,  
So patient, peaceful, loyal, loving, pure,

This were enough to prove it higher and truer,  
Than all the creeds the world had known before.'

*Example.*—BERNADETTE OF LOURDES.

In the winter of 1858, Bernadette Soubirous, a little peasant girl of Lourdes, in the South of France, had a vision which she described as a lady of wonderful beauty having a rosary in her hands.

The child had had this vision many times, but she did not know the meaning of it, nor who it was that thus appeared to her.

After an interval of several weeks, on the Feast of the Annunciation, this vision again appeared, and Bernadette, with charming simplicity, said: 'O lady, I beseech you, have the kindness to tell me who you are, and what is your name?' The lady, with her hands joined and her eyes looking up to Heaven, answered the wondering child, saying, 'I am the Immaculate Conception.'

It was less than four years since the Holy Father, Pius IX., had proclaimed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, but the child had never heard of it, so she kept repeating the words to herself as she went on her way to tell the priest what the vision said.

We know the sequel—the miraculous spring and cures, the magnificent church, the countless pilgrimages, the widespread devotion to our Lady of Lourdes.

Bernadette died in the convent at Nevers, April 16, 1879.



## THE HOLY INFANCY.

### JANUARY.

‘It is necessary to implant in the hearts of the young the love of Jesus Christ, the love of the Church, love of labour, of virtue, and of true personal dignity.’—LACORDAIRE.

THIS month, dedicated by the piety of the faithful to the sacred infancy of our Lord, brings many serious thoughts to our minds.

The Old Law was a law of fear, given to a stiffnecked people, living under all the consequences of the sin of Adam. It was promulgated midst thunder and lightning from the top of Sinai. The New Law was to be a law of love; and the Almighty chose the most lovable form to prepare men for its announcement. What a refinement of love! The little Infant in the crib is the omnipotent God, loving poor man with an immeasurable love. He is our King, our Redeemer, our Lord, our best Friend. The Divine Child was to be a model to all—young and old, rulers and ruled, learned and ignorant.

His infancy was a most natural one exteriorly.

Strange vicissitudes, however, followed one another closely, to teach us to bear the ups and downs of life with humility and fortitude. One day He is honoured by the shepherds, and the next humiliated by the Circumcision. The Kings from the East prostrate before Him and offer their presents to-day; and shortly after, His mother and foster-father fly with Him from the sword of the persecutor.

His six or seven years in Egypt were free from personal danger, and he led an ordinary domestic life there—the word ‘domestic’ implying all that is usually included in the life of a poor boy.

How many lessons we learn from Him! He teaches us not to judge by appearances; to love the poor; to bear humiliations, injustice, and inconveniences with patience; to be resigned to the will of God; to be obedient to authority; to practise domestic virtues.

Parents ought frequently to tell their children the different incidents recorded of the Divine Infant, with suitable reflections, so that they may be induced from their earliest years to keep Him as a model before their eyes. This is especially necessary at the present day, when the craving for pleasure is so apt to be increased by the many opportunities offered in every state of life.

‘O Divinest Childhood of my Saviour dear ;  
How in very weakness does His strength appear !

How Thy beauty, Jesu, ravishes my heart !  
How the more abased, the greater still Thou art !  
Near our little Jesus, docile grows my mind,  
Nor can aught perplexing in His Gospel find.  
Come, presumptuous reason, fix thy gaze on this,  
And for ever after all thy pride dismiss.'

*Example.*—ALBAN BUTLER'S MOTHER.

The famous author of the 'Lives of the Saints' lost his father and mother when young. The latter wrote the following letter to him and his two brothers just before she died :

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

Since it pleases Almighty God to take me out of this world, as no doubt wisely foreseeing I am no longer a useful parent to you (for no person ought to be thought necessary in this world when God thinks proper to take him out), so I hope you will offer the loss of me with a resignation suitable to the religion you are of, and offer yourselves. He who makes you orphans so young, without a parent to take care of you, will take you into His protection and fatherly care if you do love and serve Him, Who is the Author of all goodness. Above all things, prepare yourselves, while you are young, to suffer patiently what afflictions He shall think proper to lay upon you, for it is by this He trieth His best servants. In the first place, give Him thanks for your education in the true faith (which many thousands

want), and then, I beg of you earnestly to petition His direction, what state of life you shall undertake, whether it be for religion, or to get your livings in the world. No doubt but you may be saved either way if you do your duty to God, your neighbour, and yourselves. And I beg of you to make constant resolutions, rather to die a thousand times, if possible, than quit your faith; and always have in your thoughts what you would think of, were you as nigh death as I now think myself. There is no preparation for a good death but a good life. Do not omit your prayers, and to make an act of contrition and examen of conscience every night, and frequent the Blessed Sacraments of the Church. I am so weak, I can say no more to you, but I pray God to bless and direct you, and your friends to take care of you. Lastly, I beg of you never to forget to pray for your poor father and mother when they are not capable of helping themselves; so I take leave of you, hoping to meet you in heaven, to be happy for all eternity.

Your affectionate mother,

ANN BUTLER.

## THE HOLY FAMILY.

FEBRUARY.

‘And He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to them.’—ST. LUKE II. 51.

GOD the Son became man not only to redeem us, but also to be our model; and as the family circle is the source whence future generations are supplied, He, in union with His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, made the house at Nazareth the model for future homes.

The foundation of society is authority, properly used and obeyed; and this principle received its consecration in the perfect obedience of the Man-God, Who for love of us was obedient to two of His own creatures. Our Lady, too, despite her superiority to St. Joseph, obeyed his least wish. On such a foundation it can be easily understood how a perfect superstructure of domestic virtues and happiness was erected. Heavenly peace reigned; harmonious order prevailed; pious conversation intervened between the labours of the workshop and the times allotted to prayer; a

godlike love pervaded all; and kindness, supported by mutual forbearance and self-denial, completed the cup of domestic happiness.

‘Fathers of families have in Joseph a most perfect model of watchfulness and paternal care; mothers have in the Virgin Mother of God the most beautiful and admirable example of love, modesty, humility, and perfect faith; whilst children have in Jesus, who was subject to them, the Divine example of obedience which they should admire, worship, and imitate’ (Leo XIII.).

All, then, during this month, ought to compare their lives with those at Nazareth, and see what can be done to make our homes more like that of the Holy Family—what we ought to correct in our manners, temper, or words; what we can do to make the family reunions more happy, and thus remove the desire of seeking happiness elsewhere. A practical help will be to join the Association of the Holy Family, so richly indulgenced, and so necessary in these times, when clubs and other social gatherings are threatening to take the place of, or to destroy, domestic happiness.

‘Deeds no grander, ways no stranger,  
Simple duties as they came,  
Made their lives so like all others  
That they almost seemed the same.  
But below that even surface  
Love was welling to the brim,  
Turning every thought to Jesus,  
Bearing every pain for Him.’



*Example.*—SIR THOMAS MORE'S FAMILY.

More's family was a large one. It consisted of his old father, his wife, his daughter Margaret and her husband, William Roper, his daughters Elizabeth and Cecily, his only son John, and his stepdaughter Alice Middleton and her husband; also Giles Heron, his ward, who afterwards married Elizabeth More, Margaret Giggs, an orphan relative, whom he brought up as one of his own children, and her husband John Clement.

His great-grandson says: 'It might well be said of him what the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon: "Blessed art thou; and blessed be thy Lord God; and blessed are all they that attend and wait on thee" (3 Kings x. 8, 9). For no doubt there was the spirit of God in that family, where every one was busied about something or other . . . as it were in some religious house, all chaste, all courteous, all devout.' Erasmus says: 'His wife, who excels in good sense and experience rather than in learning, governs the little company with wonderful tact, assigning to each a task, and requiring its performance, allowing no one to be idle or to be occupied in trifles.'

## ST. JOSEPH.

MARCH.

‘It is marvellous to think of the number of graces of all kinds with which the Lord has enriched me, and the perils, both of body and soul, from which He has delivered me, by the merits and prayers of my well-beloved patron, St. Joseph.’—ST. TERESA.

ST. JOSEPH was the spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and the foster-father of our Lord. Though of the royal family of David, he led a laborious life, supporting himself and the Holy Family by the sweat of his brow. His lot, though poor, was very happy, as he lived, worked, conversed and prayed with Jesus and Mary. This happiness, however, did not exclude suffering, which is the heritage of the Saints.

His character is given in few but expressive words of Holy Scripture : ‘He was a just man’ (Matt. i. xix.). What a great deal is contained in these few words! They tell us that he fulfilled his duties to God, to his neighbours, and to himself. In this triple exercise is found the



ST. JOSEPH.

*Te facit p. 102.*



greatest perfection, and when we find the Holy Ghost bearing testimony to St. Joseph on this head, we must be convinced of his sanctity. Moreover, our Divine Lord obeyed him for nigh thirty years, and gave him every mark of respect and love that a child owes his father, and the Blessed Virgin honoured and obeyed him as a spouse.

Can we, then, fail to honour him and place confidence in his intercession, especially in our temporal wants, as it was his special duty to look after the maintenance of the Holy Family?

He is a model to us of resignation to the will of God in trying circumstances.

He teaches us specially that the performance of great things is not necessary for attaining a high degree of sanctity, but only to perform well our ordinary duties. This is a fact worth remembering, because we are apt to forget it and to set a higher value on other affairs having more *show* in the eyes of the world. We should, then, in imitation of St. Joseph, sanctify ourselves in our own station of life, modestly, quietly, and unostentatiously performing our duties, unobserved and unnoticed if possible, satisfied only to be seen by God, and asking Him for this grace through the merits of St. Joseph.

Another virtue of our Saint that we must try to imitate is his purity. The lily in his hand seems to call our particular attention to it. The evils of the times press us the more—bad

companions, a wicked press, pouring out daily torrents of impure literature, and the various attractions got up for vain pleasure.

His death was unique. He peacefully breathed forth his last sigh in the arms of Jesus and Mary, and has thus always been regarded as the patron of the dying.

His special feast is the 19th of this month. Pope Pius IX. declared him the patron of the whole Church. The feast of his patronage is kept on the third Sunday after Easter.

At night prayers we should never omit the ejaculation: 'Holy Saint Joseph, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace of a happy death.'

'True Prince of David's line ! thy chair  
Is set on every poor man's floor :  
Labour through thee a crown doth wear  
More rich than kingly crowns of yore.  
Teach me, like thee, my heart to raise,  
In toil, not ease, contemplatist ;  
Like thee, o'er lowly tasks to gaze  
On Her whose eyes were still on Christ.'

*Example.*—THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR.

St. Joseph—'good St. Joseph,' as they call him—is the great instrument of Divine Providence with the Little Sisters. They look upon him as one of the family, and treat him as a faithful friend. His statue has a place of honour in their homes.

In one of their establishments in Flanders they



had no butter for the old people, and in that country butter is almost as important as bread. An extraordinary application to St. Joseph was organized. The statue of the Saint was carried into the cellar where the empty butter crocks were. Two candles were lighted, and the old people, taking turn before this improvised altar, prayed hard. Next morning a rich citizen said to himself: 'How is it I have never yet been to see the Little Sisters' Home, of which I have heard so much?'

He went, and was shown all through the house, and was struck with admiration at what he saw. Coming to the cellar, he sees the statue, lighted candles, and old men on their knees. 'What is this?' he exclaimed, quite surprised. 'Well, sir, our old people have no butter. They are asking St. Joseph to get them some.' 'Ah! I understand now,' said the visitor, 'why I was inspired to visit you this morning. Get the pots filled with butter. I will pay for it. It is St. Joseph who has sent me.' 'St. Joseph is truly kind,' said the Little Sister. 'We knew well that he was not forgetting us,' said the old men.

## THE HOLY GHOST.

APRIL.

‘The unction which the Holy Spirit pours into souls animates them, fortifies them, aids them to win victory ; it sweetens their troubles, and makes them find their delight in crosses.’—LALLEMANT.

LET us try this month to appreciate the wonderful advantages we possess in the intimate and constant intercourse of the Holy Ghost with us, so that in future we may reap more benefit from it. We share, in common with all the faithful, in the mysterious but real operations of the Holy Spirit in the Church. He is the soul of the Church. He governs it, preserves it from error, and sanctifies it. He directs the Sovereign Pontiff, presides at General Councils, and blesses the preachers of the word of God, making it penetrate the hearts of men for the improvement of their lives.

Through the Church all the faithful receive Him, as the different parts of the body receive blood through the veins. Hence the necessity of making use of those means established by our

Lord in the Church for His reception—viz., prayer and the Sacraments. By prayer we invite Him, and if sincere, never in vain. Baptism first bestowed Him on us. Confirmation brought His gifts. Penance restores Him if unfortunately banished from our hearts. The other Sacraments make us fitted for His operations.

He is the principle of all sanctity. He enlightens us, strengthens us, consoles us, and makes our works fruitful and meritorious. He shows the sinner the horror of his state; excites remorse; inspires courage to return to God; aids him to overcome avarice, pride, gluttony, or whatever comes between him and God; shows him the beauty of virtue, the happiness of peace, and the charms of the love of God.

We ought, then, frequently to invoke His help, so that we may lead a truly Christian life; His light, that we may know the holy will of God in all things; and His strength, in order to fulfil the duties of our state in life.

‘Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on! . . .

Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see

The distant scene—one step enough for me.’

*Example.*—MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.

One of the most illustrious victims of the persecutions in the reign of Elizabeth was Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, who was put to death

under a vain pretext of conspiracy, but in reality for the sake of Christ and His Church. Elizabeth did not hesitate in signing the decree for her execution, after having kept her eighteen years in painful captivity. When the announcement was made to Mary, she said that she had prepared herself for it during her imprisonment, and expressed her joy at the thought that her misfortunes were about to be exchanged for an unlimited and unchangeable happiness. The execution was fixed for the following morning. She wrote to her confessor, who was refused permission to visit her, to ask him for the help of his prayers and other succours of religion. As night approached she prostrated herself in prayer on the floor of her oratory for two hours, and then retired to bed, where she continued praying the whole night. She rose two hours before daybreak; dressed herself magnificently, as Faith told her it was the greatest day of her life; and went to her oratory, where she received (by special dispensation of the Pope) the Holy Communion, which had been brought to her in a pyx by one of her maids.

The Queen entered the scene of execution holding the crucifix in her hands. She was forty-four years old, and the majesty of her features excited a sort of religious veneration in the bystanders.

When the sentence was read to her, she, still holding the crucifix in her hands, protested that she never made any attempt either on the life or

crown of Elizabeth, but that the cause of her death being her religion, she accepted it as the greatest favour from Heaven.

She recommended to God the Catholic Church, King James, her son, Elizabeth and her kingdom, and declared that she died in communion with the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church.

She prayed for a short time, then, with the aid of one of her maids, divested herself of those things which would interfere with the execution; then, pronouncing these words, 'Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my soul!' she placed her head on the block, February 18, 1587.

## THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

### MAY.

‘Following her, you cannot go astray; praying to her, you cannot despair; thinking on her, you cannot err; in her hands, you cannot fall; under her protection, you have nothing to fear; under her guidance, you cannot feel fatigued; under her patronage, you will arrive at your heavenly country in safety.’—ST. BERNARD.

CATHOLICS have ever loved Mary, and since the earliest ages there never existed a Catholic Church where her intercessory power was not fully acknowledged as in our own days. Hence at all times we find either her pictures, statues (often on the wayside), oratories or sanctuaries, festivals and confraternities. Hence, also, the many public devotions, indulgenced prayers, rosaries, scapulars and medals.

The month of May is specially consecrated to her. The devotions this month should, if possible, be performed in union with the congregation in a public church; but if unable to attend, they can be made at home in presence of an altar furnished according to taste and means. These pious



exercises are sure to bring down blessings on ourselves and our homes.

We should not forget, however, that these exterior devotions to Mary do not avail much unless accompanied with earnest desires and efforts to imitate her virtues, especially purity of conscience, resignation in sufferings, and the faithful discharge of the duties of our state in life. Who could approve of the devotion of a mother of a family who would hear Mass in honour of the Blessed Virgin, or visit her shrines, when her children's care and domestic concerns required her presence at home? Who could be satisfied with the genuineness of a person's love for Mary who, on returning from her altars, speaks ill of others, judges rashly of them, or provokes them to anger? Such persons rather do an injury to our Blessed Mother. True devotion to Mary always supposes fervour in the service of the Almighty.

'Bring to her altar things that are fair,  
Blossoms the sweetest and jewels most rare,  
Tapers whose starry flames token our love,  
Upward aspiring to praise her above.  
Lay at her spotless feet Nature and Art,  
But let the crowning gift e'er be thy heart.'

*Example.*—ALPHONSE RATISBONNE.

Alphonse Ratisbonne, the son of a rich Jew, was born at Strasburg May 1, 1814. He was highly educated, but cared little for religion save

to detest Christianity. Having set out on a tour to see the world, he visited Rome, and there became acquainted with Baron de Bussièrè, who was a fervent convert, and who tried to persuade him to become one also. Ratisbonne replied with a scornful smile and even blasphemy. De Bussièrè's zeal was increased by the genuine pity he felt for his friend's spiritual blindness, and he felt himself inspired to argue no further, but to try the effects of our Lady's intercession. Accordingly he gave him a miraculous medal, requesting him to wear it round his neck, which Ratisbonne promised reluctantly to do. Meantime De Bussièrè got Count de la Ferronays, late Ambassador to Russia, and several other friends to pray fervently for his conversion. The Count died a few days later, and while the Church of St. Andrew was being prepared for the funeral obsequies, Ratisbonne entered it by chance about midday. What happened is best described in his own words: 'Oh, what prayers the good Baron must have said for me! How happy I am! How good God is! What a plenitude of grace and happiness! How deserving of pity are those who haven't the Faith! I was only a minute in the church, when suddenly I felt myself seized with inexpressible trouble. I raised my eyes, and the edifice disappeared from my view, except a single spot which was a blaze of light. In the midst appeared the Blessed Virgin, tall, brilliant, full of majesty and sweetness, just as she is represented on the medal. I felt

drawn towards her. She made a sign to me as if to kneel down, but did not speak ; but I understood what she would have said. O my God ! this happened to me, who a half-hour previously blasphemed and had such a hatred against the Catholic religion.'

The celestial vision changed the disposition of his heart. He burst into tears, and was instantaneously converted from Judaism to Catholicism. After proper instruction, he was baptized. Later on he renounced the brilliant prospects held out by immense wealth and rare talents, and became a member of a religious Order.

## THE SACRED HEART.

JUNE.

'We know how salutary and profitable is the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and we cherish the sweet firm hope that great blessings will not fail to come to us from It, and that they will prove an efficacious remedy for the evils that afflict the world.'—LEO XIII.

THE devotion to the Sacred Heart is only a particular form of homage to Jesus Christ Himself, true God and true man, by honouring His love for man symbolized by the most noble organ of His adorable body united to His Divinity.

One object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to make reparation and atonement for all the injuries, insults, neglect, and coldness which He received during life, particularly during His Sacred Passion, and also for the many irreverences, sacrileges, and indifference with which He is treated in the Sacrament of His love, not only by those who are not of the household of the Faith, but, alas ! even by those who believe in His Real Presence on our altars. It was of



THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

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these latter that our loving Saviour complained most pathetically when revealing to Blessed Margaret Mary the unspeakable love of His Heart for men, and His great desire to inflame their hearts. This beautiful devotion aims particularly at satisfying this loving desire of our Lord not only in our own hearts, but as far as we can in the hearts of others. It is a most remarkable fact in those who practise it that, no matter how humble their station in life may be, they become veritable apostles, and instances have been known where whole districts have been aroused to fervour through the zealous efforts of individuals.

Another characteristic of this devotion is that we feel such a constant increase of love for God that difficulties of all kinds no longer frighten us, our courage is increased, and we find the words of the 'Imitation' verified in ourselves: 'Love feels no burthen, values no labours, would willingly do more than it can, complains not of impossibility, because it conceives that it may and can do all things. It is able, therefore, to do anything; and it performs and effects many things, where he that loves not faints and lies down.'

The love of the Sacred Heart will melt the most obdurate heart, will convert the most hardened sinner, will bring confidence to the most despairing, and will ease the misery of the suffering.

No devotion is so powerful in procuring and securing peace in families, or in making us feel

that we have a real Friend Who will not desert us in adversity, when most friendships fail.

We may show our love to the Sacred Heart in many ways according to our opportunities. Daily Mass; Holy Communion; visits to His Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament; praying before a domestic altar or picture of the Sacred Heart; offering up our thoughts, words, and acts in union with the Sacred Heart; joining the Apostleship of Prayer; frequent ejaculations; reading the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, with the intention of increasing our knowledge and love for Jesus, are all helps from which we can choose. As we find our love to increase, and experience the benefits of it, our zeal will suggest others, none of which, however, should in the slightest degree interfere with the duties of our state in life.

Try, then, to acquire a solid devotion to the Sacred Heart. You will find it a pleasant and efficacious means of securing, not only your salvation, but a very high place in Heaven.

‘Let us give Him—now—for ever,  
Our first gift—the purest, best—  
Give our hearts to Christ, and ask Him  
How to give Him all the rest.’

*Example.*—BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

This blessed servant of God, chosen by our Lord to reveal to men the marvels of the love of

His Sacred Heart, knew at the approach of the Annual Retreat that it would be her last. She fell into a slight fever. Her physician declared that her illness was the effect of Divine love, and that there was no remedy for it, but gave it as his opinion that there was no danger of death. Margaret Mary, however, remained unchanged in her opinion as to the near approach of her last hour. She asked for the Holy Viaticum. On being told that it was not thought desirable, she begged at least that she might be allowed to receive Holy Communion, as she was still fasting. This she was allowed to do, and she received it as her Viaticum, being well assured that it was her last time.

Her difficulty of breathing was so great that it was necessary to support her to enable her to draw her breath. 'I am burning!' she exclaimed. 'What a happiness would it be were it only with Divine love! But I have never known how to love my God perfectly.' Turning to those who were holding her, 'Beg pardon of Him for me,' she said, 'and love Him with all your hearts to make reparation for all the time during which I have failed to do so. Oh! what a happiness to love God! Ah, Lord! when wilt thou withdraw me from this place of exile? Nothing now remains for me but to bury myself in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and there breathe forth my last sigh.' Having received Extreme Unction, she remained for some time perfectly calm, and then,

pronouncing the holy Name of Jesus, she peacefully breathed forth her spirit in the arms of the two Sisters to whom she had foretold her death several years before. She was forty-two years of age, and eighteen years a professed religious.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

JULY.

‘In these days, when the wicked, in their hatred of the Catholic religion, make open war against it by multiplying vices and sins, zeal for God’s glory ought to inflame every soul, like a holy fire, to double the triumphs of the Crucified through the application of the merits of the Precious Blood.’  
—VEN. GASPARE DEL BUFALO.

THIS devotion is intimately connected with the Sacred Heart, and is one of the many forms by which we honour Jesus Christ Himself. The Eternal Word assumed human nature in order to be able to remedy the evils of the Fall in Eden. This was to be done by shedding His Precious Blood as an atonement to the offended justice of His Eternal Father. The last drop which issued from His sacred side, when pierced by the centurion’s lance on Calvary’s heights, showed how completely He accomplished His Divine mission. Our Blessed Redeemer was not satisfied with doing what was barely necessary, and so verified the prophecy of the Psalmist, uttered centuries before, ‘With Him there is plentiful

redemption.' Hence He instituted means to apply to individual souls the merits of His Precious Blood.

But it is in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that we are most intimately brought under the influence of this saving Blood. The Blood in the chalice is the same as that which He got from Mary in the Incarnation; the same as flowed from every pore of His Body in the agony at Gethsemane; the same as deluged the earth at the foot of the cross; and the same as that which now flows through every vein of His glorified Body in Heaven. Hence it is that we should be anxious to hear Holy Mass as often as we can. Hence, too, we ought to have the Holy Sacrifice offered for us, our families, and our deceased friends. A single Mass gives more honour and glory to God than the praises and prayers of all the Angels and Saints for all eternity, their homage being finite, that from the Precious Blood infinite.

' His Blood was wholly ours  
From first to last ;  
His high thoughts, like sweet flowers,  
A perfume cast  
Around and up into His Father's throne,  
That He would bear the weight of sin alone  
He loving asked ;  
And thus He is our own, our very own,  
From first to last.'



*Example.*—BISHOP GRANT OF SOUTHWARK.

Foremost amongst this good Bishop's characteristics was his great devotion to the Holy Sacrifice, and his zealous efforts to instil it into others.

His parting advice to a girl leaving the orphanage was, 'Never let any earthly motive hinder you from hearing Mass when you can.'

His own fidelity to this advice was remarkable. He would travel all night, get up at unusual hours, and fast almost to fainting, rather than forego the privilege of saying Mass. During one of his visitations through Berkshire, having missed the train at Reading—the last leaving for London—he was urged to spend the night there. But having appointed to say Mass at St. George's for the nuns, he was determined to get to London anyhow in time. He sought the station-master. This official declared that a cattle-train would leave at midnight, but no passengers were permitted to travel by it. Dr. Grant pleaded so earnestly that an exception was made. He procured a note to the station-master at Paddington explaining the urgency of the case, and was then stowed in a truck with calves. He reached London at 3 a.m., alighting with the cattle, to the surprise of the officials. He was stiff and chilled, but delighted with his success in being in time to say Mass for the nuns, who little suspected what it cost him.

‘It was impossible to look at him in the act of consecration,’ writes one who often served his Mass, ‘without feeling your faith deepened by the sight ; his own faith was so intense.’

In one of his pastorals he says, ‘Neglected Masses punish the people with unblessed homes and a multiplication of sorrows.’

The last note he ever wrote contains the following: ‘I hope our dear and Immaculate Mother will obtain for all the girls who have heard Mass a tender love of the most Precious Blood of her Divine Son, as this month [July] is dedicated to honour Him for having shed it for our sake.’

## THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

AUGUST.

‘If affrighted by the heinousness of your sins, if confounded by the foul state of your conscience, if terrified by the fear of the judgment to come, you are sinking down into the depths of sadness, the abyss of despair, think of Mary.’—ST. BERNARD.

DEVOTION to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the natural outcome of the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. From her pure heart our Divine Lord got His Precious Blood, and on the same heart He reposed His sacred head in the cave at Bethlehem and on the heights of Calvary.

The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity combined in the formation of this admirable heart. The Eternal Father created it a daughter’s heart, docile and obedient. The Son made it a mother’s heart, a sanctuary for Himself. The Holy Ghost bestowed on her the heart of a spouse, full of the purest and most ardent love.

For thirty years her Immaculate Heart was inflamed in the furnace of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; hence it must share in His mercy, love,

and compassion ; hence, too, the many wonderful conversions of almost hopeless cases, when recommended to the most pure Heart of Mary.

So, too, when the remembrance of the past makes us tremble at the judgment of the future life, let us have recourse to her heart, and she, who never rejected a repentant sinner, will welcome us, and bring us to the embraces of her Divine Son.

‘ Pure Heart of Mary, tender, fond, and true,  
Shed on our hearts thy heavenly radiance too ;  
That slaves of sin we never more may be,  
But make our lives a model after thee.  
Then God, Who saw thy heart so full of grace,  
Will one day let us see Him face to face,  
And with our Mother Mary we shall be  
Near Jesus’ Heart for all eternity.’

*Example.*—FATHER DES GENETTES.

Father des Genettes was appointed parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of Victories, Paris, in 1832. Finding the church deserted during the first four years after his appointment, the result of the ravages of infidelity, he prayed long and fervently for the return of his unhappy countrymen to the Faith, begging of God to show him some way to bring them back.

One day, at the *Sanctus* of the Mass, he was overcome with grief at the fruitlessness of his efforts, when suddenly he seemed to hear an interior voice saying, ‘ Consecrate your church

to the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.' Immediately his trouble and anxiety ceased, and were replaced by calm and peace.

The same voice persisting in its demand, with the approval of the Archbishop, he drew up the statutes of the future Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. At the first meeting he publicly demanded a miracle of our Lady—the conversion of Monsieur Joly, late Minister to Louis XVI. and philosopher of the Voltaire school, and who denied even the existence of God. The following day he was converted, and went to Confession and Communion, and persevered till death, a good Christian.

Before the good priest's death, more than twenty millions were enrolled as members of the Archconfraternity. More than three millions of pilgrims visit the church annually. About ten thousand Masses are offered on our Lady's altars each year. The walls of the church are covered from floor to roof with the *ex votos* from those whose prayers were heard.

## THE SEVEN DOLOURS.

SEPTEMBER.

‘It is to be a martyr, to suffer patiently, and with gratitude, the ills inseparable from our human existence, and which are common both to the just and to sinners, and we are not deprived of the glory which is attached to this title because we have not shed our blood in honour of Jesus Christ.’—ST. CYPRIAN.

THERE is one attribute common to all the human race, no matter what in life, age, or race they may be, and that is suffering. For such a common ill there must be palliatives, which, while not curing, render them more tolerable and meritorious.

The remembrance of the patience of the Man-God in His unspeakable afflictions must always be our great solace; as also the thought that our night of suffering is the dawn of hope, and that suffering is a school in which we are taught to grow in holiness by God Himself; for the soul is purified in the furnace of affliction as precious metals are by fire.

Our holy mother the Church, anxious to afford





MATER DOLOROSA.

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her children every help possible, proposes this month the consideration of the sorrows of our Blessed Lady, to show us that sufferings accompany the highest sanctity, and to point out to us a model for imitation.

From the time of Simeon's prophecy—forty days after the birth of her Divine Son—her sufferings may be said to have lasted till her death. At times they were more intense, as when she had to fly with her Child into Egypt to save His life; when she lost Him for three days; at her meeting Him carrying His Cross; when she stood beneath the Cross and saw the soldier pierce His side with a lance; or when she laid Him in the sepulchre.

When we consider Who was the Son, who the Mother, and what the sufferings, we can easily understand why she is styled 'Queen of Martyrs.' Moreover, there were circumstances which increased her sufferings immensely, and which are apt to escape our notice; for example, she suffered from the thought that her sufferings were an additional cause of pain to her Divine Son, Who loved her as no other son ever loved his mother; and then she was so helpless that she could not soothe His pains by such ordinary means as a cup of water or a caress.

Thus, we can never consider the sorrows of Mary without coupling them with the sorrows of her Son. The two are so inseparably united that she is styled the co-redemptrix of the world,

and thus we can understand her deep sympathy and readiness to succour poor sinners.

Only those who have suffered can measure the depths of others' woes, and sympathize with crushed and wounded hearts: and as no one, after Jesus, has suffered so much as our Blessed Mother, so no one, after Jesus, can dry our tears, lighten our cross, or soothe our griefs, like Mary. She will show us the value of sufferings, which detach us from the things of earth, and make us desire heavenly goods, and increase our merit in Heaven by causing us to practise many virtues, especially patience, resignation, and sympathy for others.

In our trials and sufferings, let us, in imitation of our Blessed Lady, perform our daily duties as if we were free from sorrow. Let us pray, making short, affectionate, frequent aspirations of resignation, love, and confidence. Let us forget our griefs by sympathizing with and helping those whose troubles are heavier than our own.

'Gentle Mother, we beseech thee,  
By thy tears and troubles sore,  
By the death of thy dear offspring,  
By the many wounds He bore,  
Touch our hearts with that true sorrow  
Which afflicted thee of yore.'

*Example.*—ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA.

There is preserved at Saragossa, in Spain, a picture of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, which

was much used by St. Ignatius. It is an ordinary print, representing Mary seated at the foot of the Cross, her heart pierced by a sword, her hands joined, and her head lowered. The features express profound affliction, combined with peace and resignation. The Saint held this picture in singular veneration. He wore it on his breast from the time of his conversion till his death, a period of thirty-five years. He assures us that he had received from God, by means of this devotion, extraordinary graces on all occasions. No wonder, then, that he was so full of tenderness for others. At the beginning of his stay in Paris, he had entrusted the little money he possessed to a young Spaniard, who, after spending part of it, ran away with the rest, leaving the Saint utterly destitute, and obliged to interrupt his studies in order to beg for his daily bread.

Some time afterwards, hearing that this youth was dangerously ill at Rouen, Ignatius instantly left Paris, and walked barefooted to that city—seventy miles—hardly stopping to rest on the way. He nursed the young man with tenderest care, collected money to pay his way home, and only left him when he was sufficiently recovered to proceed on his road towards Spain.

## THE ROSARY.

### OCTOBER.

‘The Rosary is the most efficacious prayer for the increase in the hearts of the faithful of devotion toward the Mother of God.’—LEO XIII.

THIS entire month—especially the first Sunday—is devoted to honour the mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

The universal popularity of this devotion, and the wonderful graces obtained by its practice, are the best guarantees of its excellence.

The prayers of which it is made up were the favourite prayers of the Church in all ages. The mysteries commemorated make a review of what our Divine Redeemer did and suffered for us. In them we find incitement to practise the virtues most necessary for procuring eternal happiness.

It is easy to see, then, what a powerful means we have to persevere in the love of God, hatred of sin, and control of our passions. Besides, the example of Jesus and Mary encourages us, in our trials, to imitate them.

How many times has the remembrance of the





OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY.

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nightly family Rosary of earlier years served as an anchor to a storm-tossed soul, or a shield to defend the youth forced by circumstances to face the dangers of bad example or wily seductions? Those in charge of others ought to establish the recitation of the Rosary in common every night before retiring to rest. No matter how humble the home may be, or how scant its comforts, the incense of family prayer will make it dear to God, and attract the protection of the Queen of Heaven. Every home thus blessed becomes a cradle of faith, a school of virtue, and a citadel of the Church against the assaults of immorality and infidelity.

‘ How oft, when trouble filled my breast,  
Or sin my conscience pained,  
Through thee I sought for peace and rest,  
Through thee I peace obtained !  
Then hence, in all my pain and cares,  
I’ll seek for help in thee,  
E’er trusting, through thy powerful prayers,  
To gain eternity.’

*Example.*—GLUCK.

Gluck, the celebrated composer, was the delicate son of very poor parents in Vienna. He had a beautiful voice, but when singing in the choir of the cathedral he took care that his *singing* was *praying*, and not an attempt to attract the attention of the audience.

One day when he had sung an anthem to Mary,

in better style than usual, a monk went up to him, and said with emotion, 'Oh, my son, you made me shed the most delicious tears of my life to-day. I have nothing to give you in token of my admiration but this Rosary Beads. Keep it in memory of me. Say at least a part of it every day ; and if you are faithful to this practice, you will be as dear to God as you will some day be great amongst men.'

Gluck was faithful to his Rosary. His family was too poor to allow him to continue his studies. It happened one evening that he was visited by a celebrated choir-master, who was commissioned to go to Italy to collect the works of Palestrina. As a result of the visit, he took the boy with him, promising to complete his instruction. Thenceforth, Gluck walked with giant strides on the path to fame, but was always faithful to his practices of piety.

At the Court of Vienna, in the midst of the evening's amusement, he—now the illustrious *maestro*—would disappear, and, like a priest for his *Office*, seek solitude to say his Rosary.

When death, after a glorious life, came to strike him down, it found him prepared. He held in his hand the Beads presented to him in his youthful days by the pious monk.

## THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

NOVEMBER.

‘To relieve the souls of the departed is to perform all the works of mercy in a single act.’—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

THE souls in Purgatory are Saints who love God intensely, but are prevented from enjoying Him on account of some debts to Divine Justice because of sin. Their pains are great. Their greatest torment is their unsatisfied desire of being with God. They have already seen Him at their judgment, and they now know His perfections in a way far different from anything possible in this life. If we only thought of this, how careful we should be not to commit venial sins.

There are many motives to induce us to help the poor souls, such as the glory that their praises will give to God when they are before His throne; pity for them—suffering without being able to help themselves; and our own interest, as charity to them brings blessings from God, and puts them under an obligation to assist us by their prayers.

We may relieve them by prayers, indulgences, almsgiving, Holy Communion, and particularly by the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

One special effect of this devotion to the poor souls is to cause us to lead a very pure life, because, as we are pleading for those, some of whom have offended God only slightly, we are constantly reminded of the punishment, and so it is not likely that we will commit similar offences.

So many reasons, then, urge us to help the poor souls; it is no wonder that Holy Church should encourage us by her own example. No Mass can be celebrated, no Divine Office recited, and no grace after meals should be said, without a prayer for the happy repose of their souls.

‘In pains beyond all earthly pains,  
Favourites of Jesus! there they lie,  
Letting the fire wear out their stains,  
And worshipping God’s purity.’

*Example.*—SS. MONICA AND AUGUSTINE.

Augustine—the wayward Augustine—having at last been converted as the result of a mother’s tears and prayers, St. Monica felt that her work on earth was done, and henceforth she sighed for Heaven. ‘Son,’ said she to him, ‘I have now no tie to earth. I have nothing more to hope for in this world. One thing there was for which I did desire to tarry a little longer in this life, which was that I might see thee a Christian





SS. MONICA AND AUGUSTINE.

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Catholic before I died. My God hath granted me more than this, in that I see thee now despising earthly felicity, entirely devoted to His service. Why, therefore, do I tarry here? Lay this body anywhere, be not concerned about that; only this I beg of you, that wheresoever you be, you make remembrance of me at the Lord's altar.'

From that moment Monica was silent, wholly absorbed in preparing herself for the advent of her heavenly Bridegroom. Augustine, full of love and fortitude, remained by his mother; though alternately lost in wondering admiration, and overcome by sorrow, with his prayers and ardent love he aided her in this last painful struggle.

After her happy death, he says: 'I let go my tears, which I had kept in before, that they might flow as much as they pleased, and found rest to my soul in weeping for her, who so long had wept for me.'

To the very day of his death he ceased not to mourn for his mother. In compliance with her dying request, he daily remembered her in his prayers, and at the holy altar. 'And now,' writes St. Augustine thirty years after her death, 'my heart being healed of that wound, in which a carnal affection may have had too great a share, I pour out to Thee, O Lord, in behalf of that servant of Thine, a far different sort of tears, flowing from a spirit frightened with the consideration of the perils of every soul that dies in Adam. . . . Therefore, O God of my heart, my glory

and my life, setting aside her good deeds, for which I give Thee thanks, I entreat Thee at present for my mother's sins. Hear me now, I beseech Thee, through that Physician of our souls Who hung upon the Cross, and Who now intercedeth for us at Thy right hand. I know that mercifully, and from her heart, she forgave her debtors their trespasses; do Thou likewise forgive her her debts, if she has contracted any during those many years she lived after her Baptism. Forgive them, O Lord, forgive them, I beseech Thee. . . . Let her therefore rest in peace, together with her husband, her only spouse, whom she dutifully served that she might be worthy of gaining him to Thee. And do Thou inspire, O Lord my God, my brothers, my masters, whom I wish to serve with my voice, heart, and writings, that as many as shall read this may remember at Thy altar Thy handmaid Monica, with Patricius, her husband, by whom Thou broughtest me into this life. Let them remember with a pious affection those who were my parents in this transitory life, that so my mother's last request to me on her death-bed may be more abundantly performed for her by the prayers of many than by mine alone.'

## THE HUMANITY OF OUR LORD.

### DECEMBER.

‘The Apostles and first Christians were all full of Jesus Christ. The love and imitation of Him was the idea of perfection they set before themselves.’—LALLEMANT.

GOD the Son became man not only to redeem us, but to teach us the rules of a good life, and to be for us a perfect model of all virtues. We are therefore like art students, who copy from a model—the art we are learning being sanctity, after the example of Christ during His mortal life. As success in any art depends upon knowledge of principles combined with diligent, persevering efforts, so to attain a high degree of holiness we must study the life of our Lord and His teaching. This study will create a great esteem for His person and doctrine. Esteem will beget great desires to imitate Him. These great desires will produce great efforts. Great efforts will be crowned with success.

The books most suitable to help us are the New Testament, or its substance in the ‘History of the Bible,’ any popular ‘Life’ of our Lord,

and the 'Imitation of Christ,' by à Kempis. When reading these, note particularly the parts that are most suitable for you, and read and think over them again and again, until they have made such an impression on you that you will find it easy to conform your life to the maxims or example, as the case may be.

Note particularly how He was a model to all men : (1) In their duties towards God, both in public and private. He spent nights in prayer. He commenced His important acts with prayer. He went with His Mother and St. Joseph to the annual feasts of the Temple. (2) Duties towards their neighbour. 'He went about doing good.' He was patient with the troublesome, kind to the afflicted, merciful and tender to the fallen, indulgent to the weak and ignorant, and kept aloof from affairs which did not concern Him or His Father's glory. (3) Duties towards themselves. He was detached from riches, pleasures, and honours.

'Amidst men's sons most fair He stood,  
Alone, unselfish, noble, good,  
The friendless' and the sinners' friend.  
The bruised reed He would not break,  
The outcast leper ne'er forsake,  
Nor little children from Him send.'

*Example.*—BLESSED PETER FABER.

When Blessed Peter Faber, the companion of St. Ignatius, was at Mantua, he received a visit from a rich nobleman, who sought advice on the



means of leading a more Christian life, and securing the eternal welfare of his soul. The servant of God said : ' Jesus Christ lived in poverty, and I live in abundance. Jesus Christ endured hunger and thirst, and I am nourished with most delicate viands. Jesus Christ led a life of suffering, and I a life of amusement and pleasure. Sir, think often on these few words.'

Having said no more, the nobleman retired, rather disappointed at the laconic brevity and simplicity of his reply. However, he resolved to practise it.

When next, at table, he saw arranged before him the rare viands and choicest wines, the words of the holy priest came into his mind, and he began to reflect. Soon his eyes were opened. He saw clearly that there was a great difference between his life and that of his Divine Master. He rose from table a new man, sought again the holy servant of God, put himself entirely under his direction, and in due time made rapid progress in sanctity.

## EMBER DAYS.

‘He who is accustomed to renounce lawful gratifications easily abstains from forbidden pleasures.’—ST. GREGORY.

EMBER Days, or Quarter Tense, are three fast days—Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday—in each of the four seasons. In winter they occur in the third week of Advent; in spring, in the first week of Lent; in summer, during Whit week; and in autumn, the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14).

These fasts were instituted to sanctify each season of the year, and thus obtain the favours of God, especially His mercy. They were also established to obtain the blessing of the Almighty on the fruits of the land. In spring we pray for fertility; in summer, for preservation of the crops; in autumn, for a good harvest; and in winter we offer up our grateful thanksgiving for the blessings received.

The Church, too, wishes us to pray for those who are to be ordained priests on these days, that they may obtain the graces necessary to fulfil all

their obligations, and the virtues that adorn their sacred calling. 'And when they had ordained for them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in Whom they believed' (Acts xiv. 22).

As alms generally accompany fasting and prayer, a donation towards the education of priests for the foreign mission would be in keeping with the spirit of the Church on these occasions. We ought also to pray for vocations, especially for the foreign missions. 'The harvest is great, but the labourers few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send labourers into the vineyard' (Matt. ix. 37, 38).

These days should also remind us of asking ourselves how we stand with regard to God. If there be anything troubling our conscience, we ought to set it right, and then make good resolutions for the coming quarter. Thus, keeping ourselves always ready for the final summons, death will be disarmed of its terrors, and the close of life will be marked with a beautiful serenity.

'And grant us, while by fasts we strive  
This mortal body to control,  
To fast from all the food of sin,  
And so to purify the soul.'

*Example.*—THE MACHABEES.

Seven brothers, commonly known as the Machabees, were apprehended and ordered to eat swine's flesh, which was forbidden by the law of

Moses. On refusing they were ordered to be tortured. Antiochus himself presided at the martyrdom, and being enraged to see such constancy in age so tender, he tried every means to terrify and torture them into a compliance with his impious demands. He condemned them to undergo the same torments one after another, that the sufferings of the foregoing might intimidate the next. The eldest was first called out, in the presence of his mother and brothers. He declared that he was ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of God, received from his forefathers. The executioners cut out his tongue, chopped off the extremities of his hands and feet, drew the skin from off his head, and then cast the body into a cauldron, where the remains of agonizing life were consumed by a slow fire.

The first being thus barbarously slain, the rest were successively tormented and slain in the same manner. Each advanced in his turn, each with the same manly fortitude bore the tyrant's tortures, and each with the same steady perseverance triumphed over his savage inhumanity.

They adored the decrees of God, Who was pleased to make this trial of their faith. They readily submitted to the torments in punishment for their sins. They cheerfully resigned a life which they hoped to receive again by a glorious resurrection. And as if the sight of sufferings had inspired them with fresh courage, they told the tyrant that he was not to fancy them aban-

doned by their God ; that it was impious folly in him thus to fight against the Almighty ; that he was but a passing scourge in the Almighty's hand, and would himself soon feel the vengeance prepared for his chastisement. Antiochus would willingly have pardoned their reproaches if he could but have got the better of their fortitude. Six of the brothers had gloriously conquered by their death ; the seventh only remained, the youngest of them all, and him the tyrant hoped to gain by caresses and fair promises. He promised him his friendship, wealth, and happiness, if he would only abjure the laws of his forefathers. When he perceived that his words made no impression, he called the mother, and desired her, if she had any fondness left for an only surviving son, to disabuse him of his error, and by her advice to preserve his life. The incomparable woman, who to a mother's tenderness joined a manly fortitude of mind, despised the tyrant's solicitations, and in derision promised that she would advise her son, since he desired it. Wherefore, bending towards the young man, she exhorted him in her native tongue that he would have pity on her who had borne him in her womb and reared him ; that he would not fear the tormentor, but look up to God, the Creator of all things ; and that he would courageously follow the glorious example of his brothers, that so, by the Divine mercy, she might be worthy to receive them all again in life eternal.

Animated with fresh resolution, the young man said to the executioners: 'Behold me fixed in the resolution of obeying the law; nor will I disobey God to obey the King.' The tyrant foamed with rage to see himself thus defeated. With fiercer barbarity than he had shown against the other six brothers, he discharged his fury upon the seventh, and tortured him to death. The illustrious mother, having nothing more to fear for her sons, followed them with redoubled vigour in their victorious career, and with them laid down her own life, on the same day and in the same glorious cause.

Antiochus shortly afterwards ended a miserable life by a most miserable death.



## STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

‘No remedy can be found equally powerful to heal the wounds of conscience which human weakness daily receives through sin, or to purify the mind and inflame it with Divine Love.’—BENEDICT XIV.

THIS is a devotion instituted as a means to foster the remembrance of our dear Lord’s sufferings, with a view to increase our love for Him, hatred for sin, and the practice of virtue.

In all ages devout pilgrims went from all parts to visit Jerusalem and the other holy places sanctified by His Presence or sufferings. Many and great indulgences were granted to encourage them. But though great the number of pilgrims, greater still was the number who wished to make the pilgrimage, but whose circumstances did not allow them. To satisfy their earnest desires, the Church sanctioned the erection of the Stations of the Cross, and attached to the pious exercise the same privileges as are granted those who actually visit the holy places.

This devotion is most profitable to our souls. What can bring before our minds in a more vivid

manner God's love for us and the frightfulness of sin? Who can hate his neighbour when he sees Jesus pray for His enemies? Who can indulge in forbidden pleasures when he sees his Saviour's body mangled from head to foot? Who can murmur in sufferings and trials when Jesus walks before, laden with His Cross?

In order to gain the great indulgences, it is necessary to go round to each station, and think piously for a short time on our Lord's sufferings. If the crowd be too large, then all that is necessary is for the priest and the acolytes to proceed from station to station, while the congregation turn towards the priest. It is customary to say a few prayers at each station. Those found in prayer-books are very suitable. Those who by illness, travelling, or other causes, are unable to make the 'Way of the Cross' in a church, may get a crucifix indulgenced by a Franciscan Father, and thus gain all the privileges by saying, while holding the crucifix in the hand, fourteen *Paters* and *Aves*, followed by five *Paters* and *Aves*, in honour of the five wounds of our Lord, and one *Pater* and *Ave* for the Pope's intentions.

The stations may also be made with spiritual profit by means of the folding booklet of fourteen pictures, which may be purchased for a trifle, but in this case the indulgences cannot be gained.

' Man of sorrows ! wrapt in grief,  
Bow Thine ear to our relief ;

Thou for us the path hath trod  
Of the dreadful wrath of God.  
By the Cross's royal road  
Lead us to the throne of God,  
There for aye to sing to Thee  
Heaven's triumphant litany.'

*Example.*—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

When this Saint was in his last illness he gave a noble example of calmness and resignation. Practising what he had taught to others, he suffered the most acute pain with such patience and sweetness that he was never heard to utter the least complaint, nor to express a single desire which was not conformable to the holy will of God. There was ever written in his face the perfect serenity of a soul triumphant over suffering. He took without any apparent repugnance the most disagreeable medicines, submitted himself entirely to his medical advisers, and was constantly saying that his friends did too much for him. Thus, in sickness as in health, St. Francis followed in the steps of his Divine Master, obeying the command which He gave to His Apostles and to all Christians: 'I have given you an example, that as I have done so do you also' (John. xiii. 15).

## QUARANT ORE.

‘Though almighty, God was unable to give more; though all-wise, He knew nothing better to give; though infinitely rich, He had nothing to give more precious.’—ST. AUGUSTINE.

THESE two words, *Quarant Ore*, mean *forty hours*, and is the name given to a popular devotion held in a public church, during which the Blessed Sacrament, surrounded by all the splendour possible, is exposed during that space of time for the adoration of the faithful.

It may be called the feast of ‘God with us’ sharing our every joy and sorrow, relieving our wants, and giving us a foretaste of heavenly bliss.

During these days the burning lights, the varied and odoriferous flowers, the fragrant incense, the gorgeous vestments, the harmonious strains, and the triumphant processions, join in making us forget for the time being the humbler forms in which our Lord has deigned to reveal Himself—the helpless Babe in the crib, the Despised of men, the Outcast on Calvary—and lead us to consider His majesty and bounty. Hence, on

this occasion our prayers will take the form of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and petitions. We feel we can never do enough, never ask enough, never thank enough, so much do we feel ourselves in the Divine presence. Then it is that we feel emotions contending in our breasts for utterance. On the one hand, we feel so overwhelmed with awe that we can scarce think of ourselves. On the other hand, we feel so insignificant that we can scarcely think of anything but our wants, knowing that He can supply them all. Being omnipotent, He can help us; being the Source of light, He can illuminate the darkness of our minds; being our Maker, He can cure our infirmities, spiritual and corporal; and being infinitely happy, He can comfort us.

We ought, then, on these days to approach Holy Communion, attend the evening devotions, make a few special visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and contribute, according to our means, to the suitable decoration of the altar.

‘ The chapel is bright with its myriad tapers,  
The fairest and freshest of flowers are there :  
High o’er the altar the incense vapours  
Float through the hush of the perfumed air.  
The sweet-voiced choir cease their singing,  
Resplendent rays from the monstrance dart,  
And the bell of the Benediction ringing  
Sends thrills of emotion through every heart.’

*Example.*—BISHOP GRANT OF SOUTHWARK.

As spiritual director, this good Bishop's longing desire was to kindle in the hearts of his penitents a tender, personal, and living devotion to our Lord in the Eucharist. 'Make our Lord,' he said, 'in the Blessed Sacrament your constant thought; recollect that He is *your Friend*; tell Him all your sorrows; go often in the day, if only for a minute, to relieve your mind in trouble, and you will find that the hardest trials will seem to pass away in a moment. Run to Him at all hours, and you will wonder at the fullness of the consolations which you will receive, and at the clearness of the answers that will come in time of doubt. Throw your cares into the hands of Jesus in the tabernacle, and they will cheer you by becoming light—very light. Never weary of being in earnest about loving Him, and never allow yourself to be frightened. "*It is I, fear not,*" are His own words.'



## NOVENAS AND TRIDUUMS.

‘God often giveth in one short moment what He hath a long time denied. He giveth sometimes in the end that which in the beginning of prayer He deferred to grant.’—*Imitation.*

OUR Divine Lord before His Ascension ordered the Apostles to remain at Jerusalem till He would send the Holy Ghost. In obedience to His commands, they remained in prayer with the Blessed Virgin and other disciples for nine days, and on the tenth day they received the Holy Spirit.

When we want to prepare for any great feast, or desire any special favours—spiritual or temporal—we ought also, in imitation of them, to make a novena by saying prayers for nine days, and ending with a good Confession and a worthy Communion. We may add any other practices during the time which our fervour will suggest, such as alms, deprivation of some pleasure, or the performance of some good work. These prayers may be said privately, in union with others, or with the congregation when the novena is public.

A triduum differs from a novena only in its duration, the time being three days.

We should particularly remember that the efficacy of our prayers depends on the good dispositions with which they are said rather than on the number of times. These dispositions are: humility, contrition, fervour, perseverance, confidence, resignation, and petition through Jesus Christ.

‘ Providence for us, high, infinite,  
Makes our necessities Its watchful task,  
Hearkens to all our prayers, helps all our wants,  
And e’en if It denies what seems our right,  
Either denies because ’twould have us ask,  
Or seems but to deny, or in denying grants.’

*Example.*—ST. PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

‘At the same time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to afflict some of the Church, and he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. Now it was in the days of the Azymes. And when he had apprehended him, he cast him into prison, delivering him to four files of soldiers to be kept, intending after the Pasch to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound

with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by him: and a light shined in the room; and he, striking Peter on the side, raised him up, saying: Arise quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said to him: Gird thyself and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said to him: Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And going out he followed him, and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he saw a vision. And passing through the first and second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And Peter, coming to himself, said: Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews' (Acts xii. 1-11).

## THE JUBILEE.

‘God will use clemency in your regard, provided that you do penance, and that you exercise yourself in the practice of good works and prayer.’—ST. CYPRIAN.

THERE are two kinds of Jubilee, the ordinary and the extraordinary. The ordinary Jubilee, or Holy Year, takes place at Rome every twenty-five years, and continues a whole year. It is then extended to the entire world. The extraordinary Jubilee is granted on particular occasions, such as the election of a new Pope, averting a public calamity, etc.

During the Holy Year all Christians are usually invited as pilgrims to Rome, to visit the tombs of the Apostles, to enliven their faith, and to gain the indulgences of the Jubilee.

To gain the favours granted, it is necessary to perform with fidelity the works of piety prescribed by the Pope, and in the manner set forth by the Bishops in their pastorals. These works are generally: visits to certain churches, processionally or otherwise, wherein prayers for the Holy

Father's intentions are to be offered; Confession; Communion; fasting; and alms.

The privileges attached to the gaining of a Jubilee are not always the same, but are mentioned in the Bull proclaiming it. There is always a Plenary Indulgence. Confessors generally receive great powers, such as faculties for absolving from reserved cases, etc., commuting vows, changing the works prescribed, etc.

The gaining of most other Plenary Indulgences is suspended during the Holy Year.

'Just Judge, and strong! we pray,  
Ere the accusing day,  
From every stain of clay  
Grant us remission.  
Guilty and sore in fear,  
We, clad in shame, appear;  
Yet for Thy mercy hear,  
Lord, our petition.'

*Example.*—BERNADONE.

During the Jubilee of 1825 a novel sight was witnessed in Rome. A venerable priest walked through the streets *en route* to the castle of St. Angelo, at the head of thirty brigands, including the notorious Bernadone, all of whom, previous to that, were the terror of Italy.

This good priest, knowing that several of this notorious band of highwaymen were his parishioners, determined to make an attempt to convert them during the Holy Year.

Having recommended the matter to God by



fervent prayer, he betook himself, breviary in hand, to the wildest spot of the mountains, between the kingdom of Naples and the Papal States. Being come to their quarters, he was accosted by 'Who goes there?' 'My children,' replied the priest, 'I don't come to do you harm. I wish you well. Allow me to approach. I am a priest, alone, and without arms. You ought to know me. I have baptized several of you. Will you be so good as to lead me to your chief?'

One of the brigands went with the news to his captain. The latter said he might come, but that he should remain as hostage, for fear that there might be some snare, and that he should lose his life if anything went amiss with them.

The priest, having accepted the conditions joyfully, was escorted to head-quarters. It was surrounded by thick brushwood and craggy rocks. The brigands had long beards, ferocious looks, sharp poniards, loaded carbines, and accoutrements fit to make even an intrepid man afraid. 'What brought you?' asked the chief. 'Children,' said the priest, 'I am your father' (weeping). 'I want you to know how I feel for you. What a life you lead! In what state are your souls? Whilst your friends, neighbours, and such a multitude of foreigners are profiting by the Holy Year, you multiply your crimes. My dear children, think of this. Will you alone refuse the graces of the Jubilee? Oh! *is it not time to give up sin?* I've come to bring you back.'



All were astonished, and kept silence. The captain broke the silence. 'If we will be pardoned, we will give up this life immediately; but if we are to lose our lives, better to die here.' 'I can't promise you anything,' replied the priest; 'no one sent me. I will ask the Holy Father to pardon you, and then I will come back. Meantime, I conjure you, think of your souls.'

They bandaged his eyes and led him to the highway. He went straight to the Pope, and obtained a promise that their lives would be spared, but that otherwise they should submit, without reserve, to the demands of justice.

Having returned, and submitted the decision of the Holy Father, he begged them not to lose so favourable an opportunity. 'After all, my dear children,' said he, 'it is better to be in prison here for a few years than to be for ever in Hell.'

Marvellous effect of faith! They submitted, and hence the strange procession witnessed in Rome. Some were sentenced for years, others for life. A tourist to Rome mentions having seen Bernadone in the castle of St. Angelo in 1842.

## THE LAST SACRAMENTS, ETC.

‘To die is not an evil ; but to die badly is the worst of evils.’—ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

*Preparation of Ourselves.*—When we feel very sick, let us not be afraid to ask the doctor if he thinks there is danger of death. Doctors and friends sometimes deceive us by pretending we are not very bad. Ask for the priest in the beginning of the sickness, when you are fitter to benefit by his ministrations. If you have enemies, forgive them. If you have debts, pay them. If you have a will to make, make it. While waiting for the priest, prepare to receive three Sacraments: Penance, by making a good Confession; Holy Eucharist, by a worthy Communion; and Extreme Unction. Mention particularly in Confession anything that gives you trouble or uneasiness of mind. In your thanksgiving after Holy Communion, fervently ask our Lord to stay with you till the last moment, to help you in the struggle. While the priest is anointing you, beg forgiveness of the sins committed by each sense, and tell God that you are

satisfied to die, and that you offer up your pains and death as a penance for your sins and in union with His.

After being anointed, do not be anxious for visits, news, etc., but prepare by prayer, etc., to meet God. Make frequent acts of love, faith, hope, contrition, and resignation. If the sickness continue, send for the priest once a week, or oftener, as temptations are sometimes frequent and violent before death. During your agony frequently kiss the crucifix, and repeat the holy names of Jesus and Mary.

*Preparation of the Sick-Room.*—Keep the room airy and clean. When the priest is sent for, place a small table near the bed, and on it put a clean cloth or towel, two candles, a crucifix, and a clean towel to put under the patient's chin. Have some holy water in a tumbler, with a feather or branch for sprinkling it, and some water in a glass to wash the priest's fingers after the administration of the Viaticum.

*Preparation of Another.*—Keep irreligious and talkative persons away from the sick-room. Put a crucifix and holy pictures in such places that they may be easily seen by the sick person. Don't tell news, etc. Often speak of God's mercy and goodness, and the vanity of earthly things. Warn the sick person in time, when danger is feared, send for the priest (even for children of tender years), and meantime tell the patient to prepare for the Sacraments. See that there is no confusion about the

room. Wash the patient's hands, face, and feet. Remove crying friends. If the sick person refuse to allow the priest to be sent for, inform the latter, and try by prayer and good advice to get him to make his peace with God. Put a blessed medal or *Agnus Dei* round his neck, or somewhere near at hand. Say some short prayers occasionally out loud, so that the sick person may join, at least mentally. Read a little now and then out of some pious book, to put some consoling thoughts into his mind. Sprinkle him with holy water when in his agony, and give him the crucifix to kiss. During the agony read out aloud from the Prayer Book the *Litany for the Dying*, and the *Recommendation of the Departing Soul*. Try and get a blessed candle, and place it lighted in his hand.

In case of sudden death, or when no priest can be had, excite the dying person to perfect contrition and confidence in God's mercy. Recite, so that he can hear and join with you, aspirations like the following: 'O my God, because You are so good, I am very sorry for having offended You. O my good God, I hope in Your mercy. My Jesus, mercy! Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me.'

When the person dies, say the prayer for the departed, found in the Prayer Book, or say the Rosary for the repose of his soul.

While the corpse is still in the house let all say the Rosary occasionally. Prevent drinking and

any unbecoming conduct. Let only a few respectable persons remain up at night. Better still to have the corpse removed to the parish church, if the custom. Be consoled, and console others, by the thought that his death was God's holy will, and the hope that he enjoys the friendship of God ought to moderate our grief.

*The Funeral.*—Many go to great expense in order to have as good a funeral as some of the neighbours. This is foolishness. If the money were given as alms to the poor and for Masses for the repose of the soul of the departed, it would do more good. The sight of a corpse or funeral should always remind us of our own death, and the necessity of preparing for it when in health.

'Tis religion that can give  
Greatest pleasures whilst we live ;  
'Tis religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die.'

*Example.*—ST. THOMAS OF AQUIN.

The monks surrounded the bed of the dying Saint. Then, with slow and silent step, the Superior came, bearing the bright ciborium containing the nourishment of Eternal Life. Immediately the Angelic Doctor perceived his Master's presence ; with the help of his brethren he rose from his pallet, and kneeling upon the floor, adored his King and Saviour. Whilst shedding many tears, amidst the sobs of the monks, who



could not control their emotion, he made his act of faith in the Real Presence of his Lord. When he had ended, and the Superior was on the point of administering the Saving Host to him, he exclaimed, 'I receive Thee, the price of my soul's redemption, for love of Whom I have studied, I have watched, and I have laboured!' Then, as the Superior lifted up the consecrated Particle to be administered to him, with a sweet torrent of tears, and with mighty devotion, the glorious man uttered his favourite ejaculation, 'Thou, O Christ, art the King of Glory; Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father!' and received gently upon his tongue the Angelic Bread which came to him from Heaven. Then he passed peacefully away from the twilight of earth to realize the one dream of his soul—to see the King in His glory, and the blessed adoring before the Everlasting Throne.



## MISSIONS AND RETREATS.

‘O, how great peace and tranquillity would he possess who would cut off all vain solicitude, and think only of the things of God and his salvation, and place his whole hope in God.’—*Imitation*.

A MISSION is a series of public spiritual exercises, given by a number of priests, who are generally members of a Religious Order. The object is to bring sinners to repentance, and to renew or increase the fervour of the parishioners.

The time of the Mission is a great season of grace. Heavenly blessings are poured on those who attend with the proper spirit. Restitution is made, peace is restored to families and individuals, the Sacraments are better attended to, and all discharge more faithfully the duties of their state in life. When the Mission is going on we should be very faithful in attending, pray for its success, and exhort as many as we can to go.

A public Retreat is like a short Mission, and is given for the same purposes. It is generally conducted in connection with some sodality or confraternity. A private Retreat may be made

in one of the religious houses specially intended for such exercises. During the time of Retreat, the person making it examines the state of his conscience, with a view to restoring peace if lost ; or to increase in self-knowledge so as to break off bad habits more easily, the causes being found out and removed ; or to make greater strides in holiness, the means to do so being better understood, and the obstacles cleared away.

A very laudable practice is to devote a few hours once a month—*e.g.*, on the first Sunday—to a little private Retreat at home, to balance our spiritual accounts. This will be certain to produce great fruit in our souls, will prevent debts being contracted with the Almighty, and will prepare us for any sudden emergency that may occur during the coming month. We will be like the gentleman who, getting an apoplectic stroke on board a ship, and being informed of his immediate danger, exclaimed with a sigh of comfort : ‘Thank God, I’m ready !’

‘ O how the thought of God attracts  
And draws the heart from earth,  
And sickens it of passing shows  
And dissipating mirth !  
’Tis not enough to save our souls,  
To shun the eternal fires ;  
The thought of God will rouse the heart  
To more sublime desires.’

*Example.*—NAPOLEON.

The following example shows how even involuntary retreat, by giving time for reflection, proves beneficial to our souls.

As long as Napoleon was dazzled with the brilliancy of his conquests, and intoxicated with applause, he neglected the duties of a good Christian, though on one occasion he stated that the day of his first Communion was the happiest in his life. Towards the end of his career, when the sun of his glory was near setting, he declared, 'I am a Catholic Christian.'

He reflected most profoundly on the Christian truths when confined in St. Helena; the sight of the mighty ocean, in its various changes, directed his thoughts to eternity and eternity's God. On one occasion he exclaimed: 'I know men, and I tell you that Jesus was not a man' (in the ordinary sense). He petitioned Rome for a priest to help him to sanctify the remainder of his life. After Father Vignali's arrival he devoted himself almost exclusively to spiritual concerns. 'I was born in the Catholic religion,' said he several times. 'I wish to fulfil all the duties it imposes, and to receive the consolations and helps it affords.' Count de Montholon, the companion of his captivity, writes: 'I had spent thirty-nine nights by his bedside. He felt distressed at my fatigue, and desired me to have Father Vignali take my place,

and "See," said he, "that no one disturbs us while we are together."'

He then humbly confessed his sins, received the Last Sacraments, and passed the remainder of the night in prayer. The following morning Count de Montholon came to his bedside early. Napoleon said to him in an affecting voice, and with a joyful face: 'General, I am happy. I have fulfilled my duties. I wish you the same happiness at death. The tinkling of the bells moves me. The sight of the priest pleases me. I must, I wish to render glory to God. I doubt if He will restore me to health. It doesn't matter. Let an altar of the Blessed Sacrament be prepared in the next room, and prayers be offered up.'

On May 3 he received the Holy Viaticum a second time, and, having bid adieu to his Generals, he said, 'I am in peace with the human race'; then, joining his hands and saying 'My God,' he expired.

## THE CHURCHING OF WOMEN.

'It is in the school of maternal tenderness that the kind affections must be first roused and made habitual, the early sentiment of piety awakened and rightly directed, and the sense of duty and moral responsibility unfolded and enlightened.'—VERPLANCK.

CHRISTIAN mothers, in imitation of our Blessed Lady, visit the church after their confinement to receive the blessing of the priest, to express their gratitude to God, to beg graces for the fruit of their womb, and grace for themselves to train them up in true Christian piety.

This ceremony is the natural consequence of the responsibility entailed by motherhood—a responsibility that affects not only individual, family, and social life, but, it may be, the welfare of nations. Who can measure the influence the maternal training exercises over the future father, teacher, magistrate, or priest? Who can realize the combined effects on society of these latter? Where is the mother, then, who can face such a responsibility without seeking from God all the helps He has put at her disposal?

In all parishes special hours are appointed for the ceremony.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the priest recites the following prayer: 'Let us pray. O Almighty and Eternal God, Who, by the happy delivery of the Virgin Mary, didst change the bitter pains of mothers into joy, graciously look upon Thy servant, and grant, through the intercession of the same Blessed Mary, that she who this day comes into Thy temple in order to return Thee solemn thanks may arrive safe with her child at eternal beatitude, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

'Jesus ! my Lord, my God, my all,  
Hear me, blest Saviour, when I call ;  
Hear me, and from Thy dwelling-place  
Pour down the riches of Thy grace.'

*Example.*—ST. FRANCES OF ROME.

As the time approached for the birth of her first child, Frances frequently implored the blessing of the Almighty on her future offspring. When she was happily delivered of a son, her first act was to offer him to God, and to have him immediately baptized, giving him the name of John Baptist. She did not entrust her child to the care of others, fearing that in her absence the careless talk and bad manners, which even in infancy may cause impressions not easily eradicated, should taint with the least evil the heart and



mind of her son. With great prudence she occupied herself with the care of her child in preference to her usual practices of charity and devotion. She did not complain that she had to give up her extra religious exercises in order to tend and nurse the little creature, whom she looked upon as the gift of God, and whose careful training was the best offering she could make in return. She lost no opportunity of imparting to him the first notions of religion. She used to repeat to him the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, clasp his little hands together, and direct his eyes to Heaven. She checked in him, by grave looks and slight punishments fitted to his age, every ebullition of self-will, obstinacy, and anger, and, later, of deceit, envy, and immodesty. Though she had the most tender mother's heart, she seldom indulged in passionate caresses, and never left uncorrected any of his faults, nor gave way in any instance to his tears and impatience. When others objected that it was absurd to expect self-command from a creature whose reason was not developed, she maintained that habits of self-control are to be acquired at the earliest age, and that the benefit thus obtained extends to the whole of life.

The child thus trained lived to prove the wisdom of her views, and became in difficult times the support of his family and an honour to their name.

## APPENDIX.

### EXPLANATION OF CATHOLIC TERMS.

ABSTINENCE, DAYS OF.—When meat may not be eaten.

ACTUAL GRACE.—Help from God to avoid evil or to do good.

AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM.—Literally, to the threshold of the Apostles. Official visits made by Bishops, etc., to Rome.

AGNOSTIC.—One who denies the ability of human reason to prove the existence of a personal God.

AGNUS DEI.—Virgin wax impressed with the image of the Lamb of God, and blessed by the Pope the first year of his pontificate and every seventh year afterwards.

ANGELUS.—Prayers said morning, noon, and evening at the sound of the bell, in honour of the Incarnation.

APOCALYPSE.—The book of the New Testament containing the revelations made to St. John.

ATHEIST.—One who denies the existence of God.

BANNS.—Triple announcement of the names of persons about to be married, in order to find out impediments (if any) to the marriage.

BASILICA.—A church of the highest dignity.

BEATIFICATION.—A ceremony in which the Pope permits a servant of God to be called ‘Blessed,’ and allows Mass and Office to be said in his or her honour, with some restrictions.

BENEDICTION OF BLESSED SACRAMENT.—The blessing of the people, after a short exposition, by making the sign of the Cross over them, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance or enclosed in a ciborium.

BETROTHAL.—A formal and binding promise of future marriage, made according to regulations prescribed by the Church.

BLASPHEMY.—To speak impiously of God.

BLESSINGS.—Invoking Divine favours, or setting aside persons or things for the service of God.

BLESSED.—A title. *See* Beatification.

BOLLANDISTS.—The name given to certain Jesuits who have written very comprehensive Lives of the Saints.

BULL.—A formal solemn letter from the Pope, with a leaden seal (*bulia*) attached.

CALUMNY.—False accusation of our neighbour.

CANONIZATION.—A solemn ceremony by which the Church bears testimony to the sanctity and glory of one of her departed members, and enrolls him or her in the catalogue of the Saints.

CARDINAL.—One of the Princes of the Church, who are the counsellors of the Pope.

CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.—One at which the parish priest, or another priest with his leave or leave of the Bishop, together with two witnesses, are not present.

COLOURS, ECCLESIASTICAL.—*White* vestments, etc., are

used on feasts of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and Saints, not martyrs. *Red* is used at Pentecost and for martyrs. *Violet* is used in Lent, Advent, and times for penance. *Green* is used on Sundays on which no other colour is prescribed. *Black* is used on Good Friday and in Masses for the Dead.

COMMUNION, SPIRITUAL.—An earnest desire to receive Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

CONCLAVE.—The meeting of the Cardinals to elect a Pope.

CONFRATERNITY.—An association for the promotion of some pious object or devotion.

CONSANGUINITY.—Relationship by blood. In Ecclesiastical law, the fourth degree includes third cousins.

COUNCIL, GENERAL.—Also called Ecumenical. A meeting of the Bishops from all parts of the world, called together by the Pope, and presided over by him or his Legate.

DEAN.—The head in many Diocesan Chapters. A Rural Dean is the chief dignitary in a certain district of a diocese.

DETRACTION.—Injuring our neighbour's character by revealing his hidden faults without proper reason.

DIVORCE.—The bond or tie of marriage can never be broken except by death. Separation may be permitted by the Church for sufficient causes.

EASTER DUTY.—The worthy reception of the Blessed Eucharist at Easter or thereabouts.

EMBER DAYS.—Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday once in each quarter of the year devoted to prayer and fasting.

ENCYCLICAL.—A circular from the Pope to all the Bishops.

## EXPLANATION OF CATHOLIC TERMS 179

- EX CATHEDRA.—*See* Infallibility.
- EXCOMMUNICATION.—Deprivation of communion with the Church.
- EXPOSITION.—Public adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the Altar.
- HERETIC.—One who professes the Christian religion, but denies one or more of its truths.
- HIGH MASS, PONTIFICAL.—A Mass solemnly celebrated by a Bishop.
- HOLY SCRIPTURE.—Another name for the Bible.
- HOLY WATER.—Water mixed with salt, and blessed.
- IMPEDIMENTS TO MARRIAGE.—Hindrances to marriage arising from the nature of the case, or from the Divine or Ecclesiastical law—*e.g.*, consanguinity, affinity, Holy Orders.
- INDULT.—A licence from the Pope dispensing from the whole or part of the common law of the Church.
- INFALLIBILITY, PAPAL.—The Pope cannot err when speaking *ex cathedra*—*i.e.*, when, as supreme pastor, he defines doctrine on faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.
- INFIDEL.—One who does not believe in the Divine origin of Christianity.
- MIXED MARRIAGE.—Marriage between a Catholic and one who, though baptized, is not a Catholic.
- MONSIGNOR.—An honorary title bestowed by the Pope on priests in recognition of special services.
- NOVENA.—Nine days' prayer, generally previous to a feast, to obtain some special favour from God.
- OATH.—Calling God to witness the truth of what we say.
- OCCASION OF SIN.—Persons, places, or things which lead us into sin.



PAGAN.—One who is neither a Christian nor a Jew.

The term is not now usually applied to Mohammedans.

PAPAL BENEDICTION.—The Pope's Blessing given to the people by a priest having the faculty.

PARACLETE.—Another name for the Holy Ghost.

PORTIUNCULA.—St. Francis's little church near Assisi.

Special Indulgences can be gained there on August 2.

This privilege is now extended to all Franciscan churches.

PRIMATE.—The chief ecclesiastic in a nation.

PROPAGANDA.—A sacred Congregation in Rome of Cardinals, etc., who are charged with the affairs of the Church in missionary countries.

PROVOST.—The chief dignitary in many diocesan Chapters.

SACRED COLLEGE.—Another name for all the Cardinals.

SACRILEGE.—A profanation of sacred persons, places, or things.

SCANDAL.—Leading another person to commit sin.

SCAPULAR.—Part of a religious habit worn over the shoulders (*scapulæ*), and generally of the same colour as the habit of the Religious Order to which the wearer is affiliated, and in whose privileges he is a sharer.

SCHISMATIC.—One who refuses to be under the Pope.

STIGMATA.—Wounds similar to those of our Lord, miraculously impressed on some Saints' bodies.

SYNOD.—A meeting of the priests of a diocese presided over by the Bishop.

TERTIARY.—A member of a Third Order attached to some of the Religious Orders.

VENERABLE.—A title given to one whose cause of canonization has been commenced at Rome.



VIATICUM.—Holy Communion given to the dying.

VICAR.—One who does duty for another as substitute.

WORKS OF MERCY.—*Spiritual*: (1) To convert the sinner.

(2) To instruct the ignorant. (3) To counsel the doubtful. (4) To comfort the sorrowful. (5) To bear wrongs patiently. (6) To forgive injuries. (7) To pray for the living and the dead.

*Corporal*: (1) To feed the hungry. (2) To give drink to the thirsty. (3) To clothe the naked. (4) To harbour the harbourless. (5) To visit the sick. (6) To visit the imprisoned. (7) To bury the dead.

## DECREES.

### I.

#### DECREE OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE COUNCIL ON RECEIVING DAILY THE MOST HOLY EUCCHARIST.

THE Council of Trent, having in view the unspeakable treasures of grace which are offered to the faithful who receive the Most Holy Eucharist, makes the following declaration: 'The holy Synod would desire that at every Mass the faithful who are present should communicate, not only spiritually, by way of internal affection, but sacramentally, by the actual reception of the Eucharist' (Sess. XXII., cap. vi.). Which words declare plainly enough the wish of the Church that all Christians should be daily nourished by this heavenly banquet, and should derive therefrom abundant fruit for their sanctification.

And this wish of the Council is in entire agreement with that desire wherewith Christ our Lord was inflamed when He instituted this Divine Sacrament. For He Himself more than once, and in no ambiguous terms, pointed out the necessity of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, especially in these words: 'This is the bread that cometh down from heaven; not as your

fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever' (John vi. 59). Now, from this comparison of the food of angels with bread and with the manna, it was easily to be understood by His disciples that, as the body is daily nourished with bread, and as the Hebrews were daily nourished with manna in the desert, so the Christian soul might daily partake of this heavenly bread, and be refreshed thereby. Moreover, whereas in the Lord's Prayer we are bidden to ask for 'our daily bread,' the holy Fathers of the Church all but unanimously teach that by these words must be understood, not so much that material bread which is the support of the body as the Eucharistic bread which ought to be our daily food.

Moreover, the desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that all the faithful should daily approach the sacred banquet is directed chiefly to this end: that the faithful, being united to God by means of the Sacrament, may thence derive strength to resist their sensual passions, to cleanse themselves from the stains of daily faults, and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable; so that its primary purpose is not that the honour and reverence due to our Lord may be safeguarded, or that the Sacrament may serve as a reward of virtue bestowed on the recipients (St. Augustine, *Serm.* 57 in St. Matth., 'De Orat. Dom.,' N. 7). Hence the holy Council of Trent calls the Eucharist 'the antidote whereby we are delivered from daily faults and preserved from deadly sins' (Sess. XIII., cap. ii.).

This desire on the part of God was so well understood by the first Christians that they daily flocked to the holy table as to a source of life and strength. 'They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and

in the communication of the breaking of bread' (Acts ii. 42). And that this practice was continued into later ages, not without great fruit of holiness and perfection, the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers bear witness.

But when in later times piety grew cold, and more especially under the influence of the plague of Jansenism, disputes began to arise concerning the dispositions with which it was proper to receive Communion frequently or daily; and writers vied with one another in imposing more and more stringent conditions as necessary to be fulfilled. The result of such disputes was that very few were considered worthy to communicate daily, and to derive from this most healing Sacrament its more abundant fruits, the rest being content to partake of it once a year, or once a month, or, at the utmost, weekly. Nay, to such a pitch was rigorism carried that whole classes of persons were excluded from a frequent approach to the holy table—for instance, those who were engaged in trade, or even *those who were living in the state of matrimony*.

Others, however, went to the opposite extreme. Under the persuasion that daily Communion was a Divine precept, and in order that no day might pass without the reception of the Sacrament, besides other practices, contrary to the approved usage of the Church, they held that the Holy Eucharist ought to be received, and in fact administered it, even on Good Friday.

Under these circumstances the Holy See did not fail in its duty of vigilance, for by a decree of this Sacred Congregation, which begins with the words *Cum ad aures*, issued on February 12, A.D. 1679, with the approbation of Innocent XI., it condemned these errors

and put a stop to such abuses, at the same time declaring that all the faithful of whatever class—merchants or tradesmen or married persons not excepted—might be admitted to frequent Communion, according to the devotion of each one and the judgment of his confessor. And on December 7, 1690, by the decree of Pope Alexander VIII., *Sanctissimus Dominus*, the proposition of Baius, postulating a perfectly pure love of God, without any admixture of defect, as requisite on the part of those who wished to approach the holy table, was condemned.

Yet the poison of Jansenism, which, under the pretext of showing due honour and reverence to the Holy Eucharist, had infected the minds even of good men, did not entirely disappear. The controversy as to the dispositions requisite for the lawful and laudable frequentation of the Sacrament survived the declarations of the Holy See; so much so, indeed, that certain theologians of good repute judged that daily Communion should be allowed to the faithful only in rare cases, and under many conditions.

On the other hand, there were not wanting men of learning and piety who more readily granted permission for this practice, so salutary and so pleasing to God. In accordance with the teaching of the Fathers, they maintained that there was no precept of the Church which prescribed more perfect dispositions in the case of daily than of weekly or monthly Communion; while the good effects of daily Communion would, they alleged, be far more abundant than those of Communion received weekly or monthly.

In our own day the controversy has been carried on with increased warmth, and not without bitterness, so



that the minds of confessors and the consciences of the faithful have been disturbed, to the no small detriment of Christian piety and devotion. Accordingly, certain distinguished men, themselves pastors of souls, have urgently besought His Holiness Pope Pius X. to deign to settle, by his supreme authority, the question concerning the dispositions requisite for daily Communion; so that this usage, so salutary and so pleasing to God, might not only suffer no decrease among the faithful, but might rather be promoted and everywhere propagated—a thing most desirable in these days, when religion and the Catholic faith are attacked on all sides, and the true love of God and genuine piety are so lacking in many quarters. And His Holiness, being most earnestly desirous, out of his abundant solicitude and zeal, that the faithful should be invited to partake of the sacred banquet as often as possible, and even daily, and should profit to the utmost by its fruits, committed the aforesaid question to this Sacred Congregation, to be looked into and decided once for all (*definiendum*).

Accordingly, the Sacred Congregation of the Council, in a Plenary Session held on December 16, 1905, submitted the whole matter to a very careful scrutiny; and, after sedulously examining the reasons adduced on either side, determined and declared as follows:

1. Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom.

2. A right intention consists in this: that he who



approaches the holy table should do so, not out of routine, or vainglory, or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity, and of seeking this Divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.

3. Although it is most expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from any affection thereto, nevertheless, it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning in future; and, if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves even from venial sins, and from all affection thereto.

4. But whereas the Sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect *ex opere operato*, nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better, therefore care is to be taken that Holy Communion be preceded by serious preparation, and followed by a suitable thanksgiving, according to each one's strength, circumstances, and duties.

5. That the practice of frequent and daily Communion may be carried out with greater prudence and more abundant merit, the confessor's advice should be asked. Confessors, however, are to be careful not to dissuade anyone (*ne quemquam avertant*) from frequent and daily Communion, provided that he is in a state of grace and approaches with a right intention.

6. But since it is plain that by the frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues, and an even surer pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed on the

recipient, therefore parish priests, confessors, and preachers—in accordance with the approved teaching of the Roman Catechism (Part II., cap. iv., N. 60)—are frequently, and with great zeal, to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice.

7. Frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted especially in Religious Orders and Congregations of all kinds; with regard to which, however, the decree *Quemadmodum*, issued on December 17, 1890, by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, is to remain in force. It is also to be promoted especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; as also in all Christian establishments, of whatever kind, for the training of youth.

8. In the case of religious institutes, whether of solemn or simple vows, in whose rules, or constitutions, or calendars Communion is assigned to certain fixed days, such regulations are to be regarded as *directive*, and not *preceptive*. In such cases the appointed number of Communions should be regarded as a minimum, and not as setting a limit to the devotion of the religious. Therefore, freedom of access to the Eucharistic table, whether more frequently or daily, must always be allowed them, according to the principles above laid down in this decree. And in order that all religious of both sexes may clearly understand the provisions of this decree, the Superior of each house is to see that it is read in community, in the vernacular, every year within the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

9. Finally, after the publication of this decree, all ecclesiastical writers are to cease from contentious

controversies concerning the dispositions requisite for frequent and daily Communion.

All this having been reported to His Holiness Pope Pius X. by the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation in an audience held on December 17, 1905, His Holiness ratified and confirmed the present decree, and ordered it to be published, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. He further ordered that it should be sent to all local ordinaries and regular prelates, to be communicated by them to their respective seminaries, parishes, religious institutes, and priests; and that in their reports concerning the state of their respective dioceses or institutes they should inform the Holy See concerning the execution of the matters therein determined.

*Given at Rome, the 20th day of December, 1905.*

✠ VINCENT, CARD. BISHOP OF PALESTRINA,  
*Prefect.*

CAJETAN DE LAI, *Secretary.*

L. ✠ S.

## II.

DECREE BY WHICH DAILY COMMUNICANTS MAY GAIN  
ALL INDULGENCES WITHOUT BEING OBLIGED TO  
CONFESS WEEKLY.

His Holiness Pope Pius X. most earnestly desires that the praiseworthy custom, so very acceptable to God, by which the faithful, in a state of grace and with a right intention, approach daily to Holy Communion, may become more general and may lead to more virtuous lives. For which reason, graciously and gladly receiving the petitions of many persons addressed to him through the most eminent Cardinal Casimir Gennari, he has justly determined to grant a special favour to all those who follow or desire to follow the practice aforesaid.

Pope Clement XIII., of happy memory, by a decree of this Sacred Congregation of the 9th day of December, 1763, granted to all the faithful, 'who, striving to purify their souls by frequent confession of their sins, were accustomed, unless they were legitimately hindered, to approach the Sacrament of Penance at least once a week, and were not conscious of having committed any mortal sin since their last Confession, the privilege of gaining all indulgences whatsoever, without the actual Confession which otherwise would be necessary for gaining them, this concession, however, being in no wise applicable to the indulgences of a jubilee, whether ordinary or extraordinary, or to other indulgences granted in like manner; for which, besides the other works

enjoined, Sacramental Confession must be made within the time prescribed.' Now, however, to all the faithful who, being in a state of grace and having a right and devout intention, are accustomed daily to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, even if they once or twice in a week omit their daily Communion, our most Holy Father Pius X. grants that they may avail themselves of the above-mentioned indult of Clement XIII., of happy memory, without the weekly Confession, which, in other circumstances, is still of obligation for rightly gaining the indulgences that occur during the week. His Holiness, moreover, has graciously declared that this privilege will hold good in future times, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

*Given at Rome, the 14th day of February, 1906.*

A. CARD. TRIPEPI, *Prefect.*

✠ D. PANICI, Archbishop of Laodicea, *Secretary.*

L. ✠ S.

The present rescript has been shown at the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Holy Relics. In testimony whereof, etc.

*Given at Rome, at the aforesaid Secretariate, the 16th day of February, 1906.*

JOSEPH M. CANON COSELLI, *Substitute.*

L. ✠ S.

## III.

THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE COUNCIL ON—  
(1) CERTAIN QUESTIONS CONCERNING HOLY COMMUNION; (2) CONCERNING THE COMMUNION OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE RECENTLY MADE THEIR FIRST COMMUNION, AND ALSO CONCERNING THE SICK SUFFERING FROM SOME CHRONIC ILLNESS WHO ARE UNABLE TO REMAIN FASTING.

On December 20, 1905, our Holy Father, Pope Pius X., having consulted the Sacred Congregation, published the decree 'On the Daily Reception of the Holy Eucharist,' by which all the faithful of whatever state or condition were earnestly exhorted to frequent and daily Communion, as something greatly desired by Christ our Lord and the Catholic Church; so that no person in a state of grace and in proper dispositions should be dissuaded from approaching the Holy Table.

In that decree, among other things, it is laid down in Art. 7: 'Frequent and daily Communion must be fostered particularly in religious institutions for both sexes; most earnestly must it be encouraged in seminaries for Church students, whose lives are to be devoted to the service of the Altar; and likewise must this practice be encouraged in every kind of establishment for the training of youth.'

Furthermore, in order that the practice of the daily reception of Holy Communion, so praiseworthy and pleasing to God, may be propagated and bring greater fruit, His Holiness, not content with the indulgences



granted on May 30, 1905, to the faithful who should say the prayer for the propagation of the custom of daily Communion, in addition, by a decree *Urbi et Orbi*, dated February 14, 1906, issued by the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Relics, has graciously conceded that all indulgences may be gained by daily Communion without the necessity of weekly Confession.

The many newspaper comments, and also the large number of letters sent to the Sacred Congregation by Bishops and the Superiors of Religious Orders, go to show the joy and gratitude with which the declarations and arrangements of the Holy Father have been received.

But at the same time doubts and questions began to arise, and among them there are two worthy of special consideration—viz., those which are connected with children who have but recently made their first Communion, and the infirm suffering from some chronic illness.

Wherefore the Holy See has been asked to solve the two following doubts :

1. In establishments for the training of youth, are those who have just made their first Communion to be urged and taught to go to Holy Communion every day ?

2. Is there any remedy for those who are sick for a considerable period, and who cannot observe the fast, to obviate their being deprived of the Eucharistic Bread during their long illnesses ?

*Solutions*.—The Congregation of the Council, having considered all things carefully, came to the following decisions on September 15, 1906 :

To the first question: That, in accordance with Article First of the decree, frequent use of the Holy Communion is recommended even to younger children,

who, once they have been admitted to their first Communion, according to the prescriptions of the Roman Catechism, chapter iv., n. 63, ought not to be hindered from its frequent reception, but rather encouraged thereto, to the rejection of a contrary practice anywhere prevailing.

To the second question: Your proposal favourably entertained, after putting the matter before the Holy Father.

From the foregoing we may gather:

1. The dispositions requisite for frequent and daily Communion are a state of grace and a right intention.

2. These dispositions are eminently found in first communicants, whose minds have not been affected by sin, and who are free from hypocrisy.

3. Wherefore frequent and daily Communion is to be strongly commended to young children, since it is greatly to be desired that before they are overcome by passions they should be clothed in Christ, and thus shielded in their innocence and piety.

4. This most salutary practice is to be specially followed in seminaries, monastic houses of either sex, and other religious houses, Catholic schools and institutions, in which even little children are educated and brought up.

IV.

COMMUNION OF THE SICK.

After the decree issued December 20, 1905, concerning the frequent and daily reception of the Blessed Eucharist, and the indulgences granted May 30 of the same year by our Holy Father Pope Pius X. to all the faithful who should recite certain prayers with devotion for the propagation of daily Communion; also after the subsequent decree, *Urbi et Orbi*, of February 14, 1906, issued by the 'S. C. Indulgentiarum et Reliquiarum,' by virtue of which the faithful could, by daily Communion, gain all the indulgences without an obligation of confessing weekly, it is unnecessary to say how gladly such beneficent wishes of the Holy See have been received, especially by the Bishops and Superiors of Religious Orders. Hence, since zeal for cherishing piety has been enkindled, an inquiry was made to see if there could be any possibility of obtaining concessions for the sick who are afflicted with tedious maladies, and are desirous of being strengthened frequently by the Eucharistic Bread, and are not able to observe the natural fast in its entirety. Wherefore petitions to this effect—*i.e.*, on behalf of the sick—were presented to our Most Holy Lord, Pope Pius X., and he, after maturely weighing the matter and conferring with the Sacred Congregation of the Council, has graciously conceded that sick persons who have already been laid up for a month, and have no sure hope of speedy recovery, shall be allowed, with the confessor's approval [*de confessorii consilio*], to receive

the Most Holy Eucharist in spite of their having taken nourishment in form of liquid [*per modum potus*]: in the case of those living in pious households where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, or which enjoy the privilege of having Mass celebrated in a domestic oratory, once or twice a week; in the case of others, once or twice a month . . . etc., etc.

*Given at Rome, December 7, 1906.*

✠ VINCENT., CARD. BISHOP OF PALESTRINA,  
*Prefect.*

C. DE LAI, *Secretary.*

L. ✠ S.

## V.

### EXTENSION OF THE DECREE OF DECEMBER 7, 1906, CONCERNING THOSE WHO MAY RECEIVE NON-FASTING COMMUNION.

The following question was proposed to the Sacred Congregation: 'Does the denomination "those who are lying ill for a month" [*infirmi qui a mense decumbunt*], and who, according to the decree of December 7, 1906, are allowed to receive non-fasting Communion, include only those who are sick and actually in bed for a month, or are those included who, though suffering from some serious illness, and medically certified as unable to remain fasting, yet cannot remain in bed, or are even able to get up for some hours daily?'

The same Sacred Congregation, on March 6, 1907, gave the following answer: 'Both classes are included;

moreover, as a precautionary measure, this answer has been submitted to the Holy Father.'

Furthermore, on March 25, 1907, having received the report of the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, the Holy Father, Pope Pius X., graciously confirmed and ratified the resolution of the Sacred Congregation, and commanded it to be published, anything in the least to the contrary notwithstanding.

✠ VINCENT., CARD. BISHOP OF PALESTRINA,  
*Prefect.*

C. DE LAI, *Secretary.*

L. ✠ S.

## DON'TS.

1. DON'T dispute on religious matters unless you are well instructed in the subject, and hope to be able to do good.

2. Don't argue with one who is not sincerely seeking the truth.

3. Don't argue with a person who boasts that he has thrown religion with its practices aside. Ask him if ~~that~~ made him happy.

4. Don't believe everything you hear a person who has travelled abroad saying about the Catholic Church—superfluous priests, extravagant devotion, etc. They usually draw general conclusions from particular facts, or make no allowance for climate, temperament, surroundings, etc.

5. Don't be led astray by fine language, either spoken or written. See if it be according to reason and religion.

6. Don't treat an enemy shabbily. He may be a friend later on.

7. Don't wait for great opportunities to practise virtue. They seldom come. Make use of the thousand and one little occasions which occur frequently—submission to painful duties, to superiors, to annoying events. Give good example—by modesty, cheerfulness,



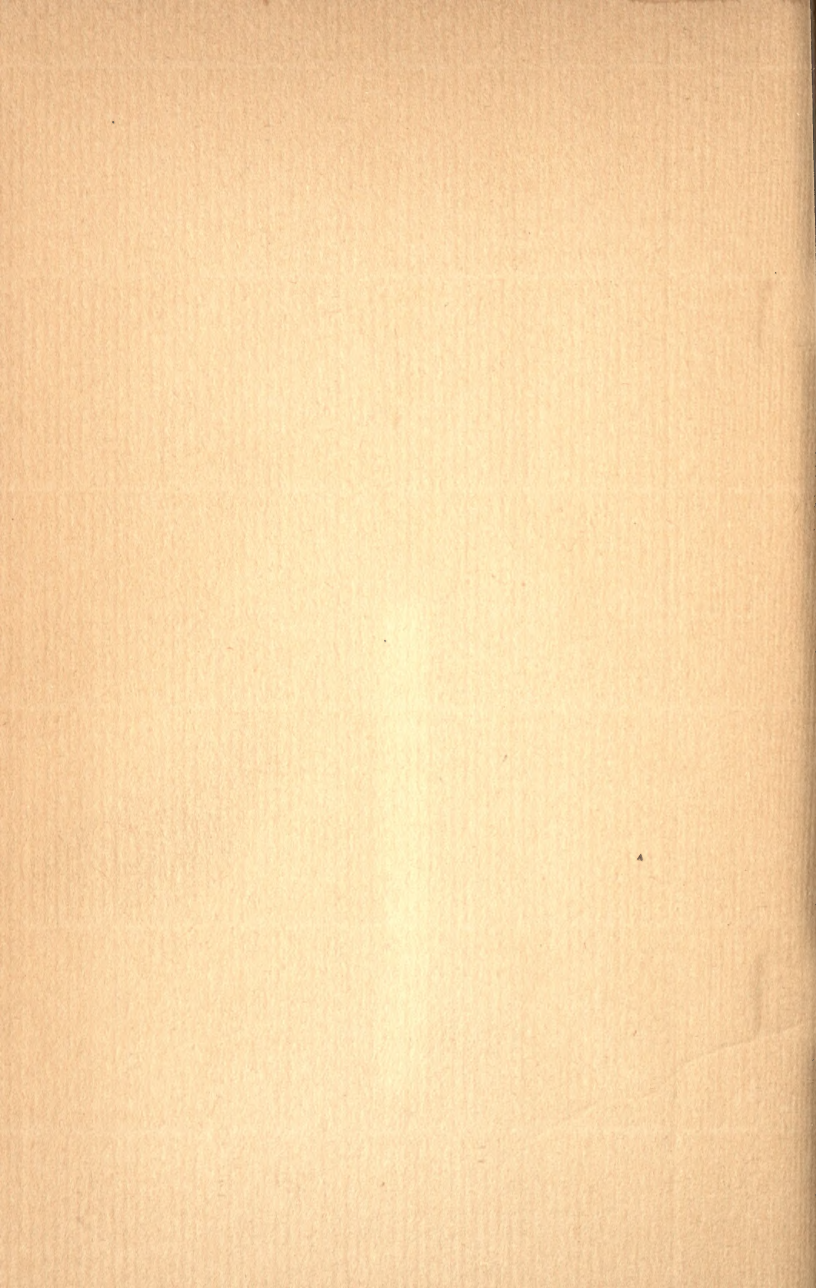
fidelity, helping others. Resist temptation—to anger, to gluttony, to ill-humour, to rudeness. Be faithful—in labour, in keeping promises, in religious duties. Be generous—in alms, in comforting, in forgiving, in forgetting self for the sake of others.

8. Don't imagine that you are indispensable, and so pour yourself out on external things as to neglect your soul. Our own experience shows us that Popes, Kings, business men, and parents have been done without from the moment that death took them away. In like manner we can be done without, too. It is only a matter of time.

LAUS DEO SEMPER.







"Catholic"

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